The Masque of King Charles VI.

and other Poems

Courtenay Mansel

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THE

Masque of King Charles VI.

AND

OTHER POEMS

BY

SIR COURTENAY MANSEL, BART.

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Masque of King Charles VI.

A PLAY-PHANTASY

— Dramatis Personæ —

Sir Peter of Craon.

Gaston.

Duke of Orleans *(brother to King Charles)*.

Sir Oliver of Clisson, *Constable of France*.

Sir Yvain de Foix.

Duchess of Orleans *(Valentina Visconti)*.

[Lord de la River.

Sir Jno. Mercier.

Sir Jno. de Bueil.

Lord of Dervaux.]

A Physician.

A Prelate.

Duke of Burgundy *(uncle to King Charles)*.

Courtiers, Ladies, Soldiers, the Mob, the Queen, and the King, *in dumb show*.

The Masque of King Charles VI.

Act I. Scene I.

A room in the apartments of the Duke of Orleans, in the Hotel de St. Pol.

Craon.—Then give me here the Seneschal's Accompt,
That latest one in which the Balance stands
All on the wrong, and most accusingly
Points as a Sign Hand at my lords Affairs.
What said he, Gaston, to excuse that Chance?
Gaston.—He said, my lord, so many were the Drafts
Fallen due unceasingly, like Winter Leaves
That wither as they fall—that those Demands
So multitudinous and so peremptory,
All insufficient made the Revenues
Of all my lord's Domain—indeed, himself
Of his own Monies hath disbursed Part,
Part borrowed of the Ghent and Arras Merchants
At most extortionate Usury.
Craon. Will he not
Levy a Tax the more?

Gaston. It cannot be,
My lord, the People groan.
No Wolf that ravens on the Mountain Heights,
No Robber Band among the misty Woods
Can pinch them nearer. Taxes, Tallages,
The King's Poll Tax, my lord, and the Gabelle
The Hundredth and the Tenth.
Aye, all their Sweat
May hardly earn them Bread.
He told us so, my lord, and in Sincerity
Of his good Faith his Tears were Evidence.
Craon.—Moneys, my lord must have, Gaston. 'Tis inconceivable
That such a high Estate, noble Conditions
Avail not to it. Shall a King's Brother want
For necessary Expenses? or is France's lord
Grown so impoverished that his Blood shall lack
Sufficiency?
[*Pausing*]. My lord's Revenues are,
'Tis too notorious, greatly pillagèd.
Gaston (*muttering.*)—A Fico in these Days for Honesty.
Craon. Do they blame Clisson for't?
Gast.—Ay, mightily—for he, they say, hath taen
More View of Seigneuries than Loyalty

And of the Moneys in the recent Wars
Passing through 's Hands—nay, rather passing not
(So they aver) hath cozened and despoiled
Those who upheld their Liege lord's Sovereign Rights
As a stanch Vassal should.
Craon. I'm glad on't, for I hate him so,
This Clisson, that my very Veins do boil
When he hath passed me, and Distemperature
Seizeth my Spirit, and the very Soil
Seems sullied where his Shadow sallieth.
For like a Shadow doth his Puissance blight
And stain upon the Commonwealth of Men.
And from their Eyes obscures the dreaded Sun
That makes their Ways to flourish, and doth light
From Savage Darknesses the Wilderness—
Ay, most majestical.
Such then an one is this,
That darkens all our France, and brings to naught
Long suffering Loyalty, brave Trust, all common Toil
The Bond of Union, the Cement of Faith.
This, like a Pest, hath fallen upon all,
And o'er all Counsel like a Plague Spot hangs,
Seduces and corrupts the Heart of Men,
With Lips as Honey sweet, yet Throat of Gall,
And as of Roses amid revelling Nights

Doth steep i' the Venom of his Avarice
Our flagging wilted Fortunes.
With kindling dead Men's Pyres
Of this proud Sinner are the Banquets lit!

Gaston, the Duke doth ever on him lean
More than his former Wont. Oh, sorely, I misdoubt,
He gains upon me as the encroaching Tide
Gains on the pebbly Shore. Hast ever stood
There on the Sea Brink, and beheld the long
Fierce Rollers rage agape against the Land,
Marked how each Tide by little balked of Prey
Hissed in Withdrawal? Even thus I stand
While the false Constable comes rolling in his Waves.
The seventh Wave engulfs!
My lord is sunk.
Besotted in his Folly thus to trust
Where no Trust may be laid.
The Constable
Gnaws like a Worm i' the hollow Heart of the Bud,
And though the Sound be bruited everywhere,
Because their dazed Eyes lack its Cognisance,
Gaston, they'll not believe it—never, never,—
My lord is drowned in Love for that fair Fool
That flaunts her Favour in the Duchess' Eyes,

As Swords were blunt in Milan, and no Drugs
Should be compounded there.

Then we are bid
To schedule her Expenses, this light Butterfly
Of Masques and wanton Revels.
I would I were a Fire to scorch her Wings!
'Tis Clisson's Creature without a Doubt. My lord
is changed
Toward me since he knew her. Would to God
He'd Prudence to distinguish false from true
I' the Mint of Friends.

[*Enter the Duke. Craon motions to Gaston, who withdraws.*]

Duke (*reading papers.*)—What's this of Prudence
Peter?
Alack! my Peter, Prudence now no more
Sits at the Helm, is Pilot of my Course.
No more with cunning Words and honeyed Phrase,
Hath Pleasure Lures, or Wisdom stern Reproof,
No more amid the furious Elements
And warring Winds my Pinnace rides secure,
Prouder in Fates Despite—nay rather broached,
And wallowing in the Tide she fills amain
The fickle Legend that *invicta* claims,
Flattering most idly the disloyal airs.

All my Heart's Usance now debasèd seems,
And in Love's Currency all Objects must
Anew be rated. Bauble Reputation,
Glory and Wealth and Honour, empty all.
Now, Smiles and Glances are my Treasure Store,
And Sighs are Tribute meet, ay competent.
My weary Hours are in Use assigned,
For which imperious Love doth make Distraint,
Suing the while harsh Process against me!
Craon.—Ah! say not so, my lord, but rather say
That you are young, beloved, a mighty Prince,
And a great Monarch's Brother—comeliest,
The Phœnix of our Age, the World's Delight,
All the World's Envy.
Duke. Yet not prosperously,
Or so my Mind misgives me, moves my Fate.
Was told me once an ancient Apophthegm,
Your Coz of Brittany it was, upon a Time
In Dinan Keep, while with bejewelled Hand
His mocking Fingers anxiously besought
My wandering Fancies, "Beggars there pardie,
"To rail so shrill on Fortune justify,
"He that's born lucky never shall be poor."
Ah! me, the Earl of Valois in the former Days
Was named for Hungary's King, and then Touraine

For Duke of Milan, lastly, Orleans,
Regent of France.
Fie, empty Fantasy!
John of Bohemia rules in Hungary,
The Sforza in Milan,
And France obeys . . .

The curtain at the doorway is quietly lifted. The Duke and Craon turn, and perceive Sir Oliver of Clisson, who enters arrayed in bright armour, and bows to the Duke reverentially.

Act 1. Scene 2.

A room in the Hotel de St. Pol. A Lady sings. Clisson seated on the balcony. He beckons to Yvain below.

Clisson.—'Tis excellent well sung!
Here with me,
My Yvain, where I love to sit and mockingly,
And from this Point of Vantage, (safe esconsced here,)
Gaze through this narrow Casement on the World.
(*Enter Yvain*).
Below the Strife of Tongues bewilderingly,
The jostling Footsteps, all the crowded Hour,
The Myriad Deeds, the Myriad Hearts of Men,
Told and retold a Myriad Times and Ways.

Lo! in Life's Desert with Egyptian Eyes,
A Heart of Stone is set, that without Pause
Unto dry Lips takes up a Stream of Lives,
(Wise with all Wisdom, but a soulless Thing)
Slaking them up as doth the thirsty Sand
Water that's Life! O! 'tis the World's Return
To ripen on the Waste of human Lives,
To purvey Loss but not to suffer it.
This Thing of Mystery, this Jest, this Paradox,
This Riddle that no Century unlocks
Unfathomed ever baffling—

Dost thou take

The Meaning of my Apologue, dost see
(For this Enigma is a silent one)
How all the World, like some great monstrous Thing,
Hath aye its Pulse, its Movements, Appetites,
And fattens us as we the lazy Beeves,
Unto the Sacrifice?

Thou camest to Court

As a young Eyass, that against the Sun
Aspires its new fledged Pinions. But the Sun
Thou soughtest, hath scorched thee. Oh! thou wert mistook,
Not in the Sunlight, not the breezy Air,

But in the Garbage Heaps thou shouldest have
sought
Where Mountain Vulture pries for Offal Prey.

'Tis all a Game, a Game of make believe,
Where Treachery doth gloze with fawning Tongue.
Art thou content? Wilt thou be writ an O,
To follow on the I of greater Men?

Yvain, your Father was a mighty Prince,
And purposed greatly by you. But, indeed,
Death unpreparedly that swept him hence
Hath left you empty, left you indigent,
Bereft of him that was your prop and Stay to build
Upon secure Foundations toward the thronging Airs
A Pinnacle of Splendour. Laughter, ay, and Gibes
Are now your Portion, your Inheritance,
And Emptiness your Favour.

Common Talk
Avers that your rich Plate is pawned away.
Your Meat off Pewter taen, your Creditors
Chafe at the hardly granted poor Delays
Expediency with clutching Fingers takes
To perish at the asking.

Straws must serve

When solid Ground beneath the Footsteps fails.
The Smile of Princes is a broken Reed,
Their Boons unfitted for Midwinter Frosts,
Their Favours gild but as the setting Sun
The hollow Clouds that yet enfold the Storm.
Oh! leave them all,
Build on securer Ground more slowly but more truly.
Here's what shall end your Troubles.
What's the Task?
A slight one, to speak soothly. Shalt persuade
My lady Duchess of Orleans that Craon hath
Played the sir Pandarus of Troy unto her lord,
And fostered his loose Pleasures.
This first Pay
Shall prove thy greater Fortunes, and thou'lt
Clisson serve.
See, here's a Paper that the Duke hath dropped
In Craon's very Hand—'twill colour all.
[*Pausing.*
Ah! thou wilt do it, thou wilt not refuse
This proffered Hand of Fortune. 'Tis a Hand
Held out to help you further.
Yvain (*hesitatingly*) Ay, my lord,
I will obey.
Clisson. Good Friend, farewell, I'll not forget

This weighty Service. [*Exit Clisson.*

Lady (*to another lady*).—How gloomy seems sir
Yvain that ersttime
Was deemed the Courts most joyous Ornament.
Dimmed are the Sparks of Greatness, and the Branch
Withered that sprung so fairly.
A God's Name, what Frost
Hath frozen these sour Looks upon this Face
Was wont to smile as May?
(*To Yvain*)—Sir, shall I sing to you?
You seem distraught and sad!

Yvain Madam, I cry you Mercy.
I shall be much beholden to you, my fair lady.

THE LADY'S SONG.

Ere the falling Shadows grey,
Sadly leave the dying Day,
Passing from the Ranks of Light,
Shading fast to mystic Night.
Ere the Twilight softly pales,
O'er the dim and misty Vales,
Ere begins her mournful Moan,
Philomela sad alone.
Where the Fairies circle round,

There alone is true Joy found,
Where there blows the sweet wild Thyme
Where there springs the fragrant Lime.
Where the freeborn Mavis sings,
Where the elfin Harebell rings,
Where all Natures Voice is free,
As in her fresh Infancy.

Lady.—Why sir, you seem the sadder for my Music.

Act 1. Scene 3.

Hotel de St. Pol. An apartment of the Duchess of Orleans.

Yvain de Foix.—My lady Duchess, on the King's Behalf,
Some Token bring I that, despite scant Worth,
Approves his Nobleness, his Love, to you.
See on its panelled Ribs the Casket shows,
With thick-set Orient Pearl and crusted Gems,
Great Tales of Love and weighty storied Woes.
Love that hath wrecked a World in Storms of Woe,
And Woe to write Love's piteous Epitaph.
Helpless, unskilful Pilot ravening
The cruel Seas around thee agonise

With Gusts of whirling Passions, torn and swept,
Drenched with the bitter Salt the freezing Brine,
Of mighty plunging Breakers, and ahead
Looming the promised Shore, the Land of Hope.
The Lights of Home. Another, turn it o'er,
See, here's another Picture—of the Choice,
The fatal Choice—the heavy Web of Fate
Floating in Passion's Breezes to enmesh,
Undying Love, Love's Lovers, all the Town,
So frail a Bridge yet apt for Doom to cross,
With thunderous Tramp and Wrath of marching Men
Fate's clamorous Knocking at a mortal Door.
Paris, your Foes are on you! Troy your Gates
Smoke to the Heaven! Palaces belch forth
With Fire and Fury dazzling Shapes of War
Helmets, a thousand Plumes, the glittering Mail
Of angry Conquerors.

Oh! rail no more,
Thou hapless Priam on Necessity,
That now outwearied, Buffetings aside,
Is ceased from Vexing. Trouble nevermore
Can burst th' unquiet Barriers of the Soul,
Unfix the passionless, the frozen Mask
Of formless Miseries—Death Mask of Fate—
To Bitterness a Truce.

Most noble lady, see the Spring advance,
Wreathed round with Blossoms scattering Fruitfulness
And budding Joys.
In the nigh Thicket's Gloom
Where shimmering Sunlight crevices the Shade
Lurk Fauns and Aegipans.
A Clamour loud
Salutes the coming God—forever young
And fresh immortally—with Ivy bound
And Thyrsus bearing.
Here the last and first
All peerless Things surpassing (by fond Paradox),
Vision of matchless fatal Loveliness she comes
Unmarred by jarring Discords, undisturbed, in Reverie.
Dream Vision of the Past—unhappiest,
Most loved of Women.
'Tis for the loveliest
And the most loving.

Duchess.—Your Speech is wrong, sir Yvain, all awry
Your Compliments are twisted. Woman needs
No Measure thus of Love, for still her Heart
Must weigh that Pulse of his, and anxiously
Make Count of Smiles and Glances his Indicia.

Until perchance the Close of Summertide,
The golden Prime of Love's climacteric befals,
Wild wandering Winds molest its Solitudes,
Scattering the Leaves afar. The lonely Birds
Are fled or songless—wilted the red Rose—
Blighted its Flowers. Misty Autumn comes,
Love's Enemy, th' untimely Harvester,
Reaping the frozen Fields and clutching all
The scanty Gleanings of the sullen Time.
Ay, then the shifting Currents veer and change,
Blowing cold Blasts and icy alien Words,
And Change of Heart and Memory's Bitterness,
Contrasting Past with Present—Times unkind
With happy Yesterdays.

Yvain. Not otherwise
Once sprung the Soul's fair Garden fruitfully
With Bud and Blossom furnished. All Things there,
Save only sweet Content.

Yet soon ill Will
To shatter Paradise availed, for then and now
To blast with Basilisk Glance Malevolence
Through untold Centuries Man's Destiny.
Why, Madam, such another blessed Pair ye were
The Cynosure of Eyes ay Frances Pride,
Lords of the land, whose Fate is linked with ours

By Ties intangible yet manifold.
Suffer, and we must suffer. All our Hearts
Lie faithful at your Feet.—Turn not away
Your Looks from us.—Let not your burning Glance
Peer past our feeble Love.—Grief tears away
Our poor Solicitudes! Oh! lean on us,
Make not your Sorrows barren of good Help.
Duchess. Ah! Yvain, I have been
A happy Woman. In his Love most blest,
My lord my Husband's. Happy in my Babes,
My dearest Children. Now that Happiness
Seems but a Whetstone set to sharpen Grief
And grinding Anguish till it pierce my Heart.
Speakst thou of evil Counsel.—Much I fear
Some gnawing Tongue hath sullied Quietude
And ravished all my Peace,—driven Love away
Into the bitter Desert to atone
For too much Happiness. Oh! jealous Gods
That cannot look on Bliss without ye blast it.
Was this poor Fortune such a precious Thing
Ye could not spare it from your Treasure Store
Of forfeit Mortal Happiness, dead withered Joys?
Yvain.—My lady Duchess, who is it that tends
Aye like a Shadow o'er my lord's Affairs,
Darkening and blighting all? Who is it comes

Betwixt you and the Light ? What Confidant
Hath Seizin of his Heart ? A fair Scroll once
Upon whose willing Surface Love the Scribe
Wrote mystic Syllables, but now, alack !
By this dark Palimpsest of Villainy
That blots your Script from Sight his Heart from you
Is turned and aliened. O, lady, take
Sharp Note of this that whispers in his Ear.
Skulks by his Side to cosset every Whim,
Forestalls his slightest Favour, treasures up
Ill Thoughts and Counsel like an Alchemist
Of Poison bearing Slanders, that distils
Ill Principles from Sources innocent ;
All golden Merits in his Crucible,
All gilded Things to Dross and Scum are wrought,
And precious Virtues subtle Synthesis
To worthless Coal and dusky Ember burns
That scintillate no more, but warningly
Like a dull Eye in heavy Mockery
Turn upon you.

Language of Eyes !
A steely Glitter in the Constable's
Dark Purpose in Queen Isabeau's—menacingly
Like two dark Hounds from East and West direct
Upon a common Prey.

Thence, Union firm

Of Strength in Weakness—Hatred as Despair
Making strange Bedfellows.

An if my lord
So lose the Hand that curbs his Recklessness,
Your Sons their careful Mother's Fostering,
Shield of their Infancy from Enemies,
What Aid abideth them? Do therefore thou
For Innocence an Arm of strong Defence,
For Love a Buckler safe courageously
Bear up against the Foe.

The crownèd Snake
Hath still a Coil for these, a gaping Jaw,
A poisonous Sting. For pusillanimous
Visconti never was, nor you the least.
Duchess.—What would you have me do?
Yvain. Read first this Scroll.
Forbear to yield.
Make Head against assailant Ills, be armed
With triplex Obduracy, make Amends
For evil Hap with Sally venturous
Into Fate's very Heart to paralyse
With reckless Daring Opposition.
Chide then my lord the Duke upon his Turn,
The Thunders of your Rage, the vasty Wrath
Of sundered Heart Throbs elementally

From Poles opposing, by great Spaces joined
To Love's sharp Contrary, most piercingly
Flame through the empty Void, reverberate
In sullen Antiphone. With falling Star
Light up the lonely brooding Passion Sea,
Love's Firmament in dark Eclipse inanimate
With murky Lava Glow torrential,
Whose strange phosphoric Glimmer oversets
Our World's familiar Things, the native Air,
The pleasant Sunlight, masking speciously
Plague Marks of Fate, dissevering the Throng
Of common Sympathies. Pour out sans Stint
Your Wraths brimmed Vials—Till when at the last
The faltered Question comes—Who told you this?
    Then you
Spare not to answer presently—Who knows
Only too well the Villainy, repents
And yet avails not, only flagrantly
Stripping the ragged Cloak of Rectitude
To show the lurking Ill. 'Tis one that knows
The lean and hidden Visage underneath,
For wholesome Air that stifles gasps unmasked.—
Say all, say everything but this one Name—
Peter of Craon utter not. Ideas full fledged
The Mind accepts not willingly. The Egg

Is other Matter. Hist then quietly
Let the poor Thing sit hatching on the Nest
To foster suspect Thoughts and undisturbed
Cherish and deem the alien Fancy Kin. Ingratitude
Blamed and distasteful Quality, so reprobate,
Yet germane to our Hearts and native in
Our Souls, as to the Soil the Plant that clings
And twines with ruddy Berries lusciously
The Poison Briony. What! hesitate!
As well should some great Prince in 's potent Mind,
Reaching for Provinces (rich Appanage
Of future Fortune) from a golden Crown,
Most abjectly recoil, and Coward like
The pleasant Vision of so sweet Dominion
Wholly reject, abjure.
Strained eyes afar,
The wished for Hill descrying then at Hand
In voluntary Blindness to contemn.
Figure yourself a Prince preparing War,
An Empire of the Heart the precious Stake;
Rally your Levies summon up in Haste
To aid your Cause all Looks ingenuous,
Dissimulated Tears and feigned Sighs,
Reproaches' burning Cheek and Sullenness,
Monotony eschewed.—Traits of Disdain

Winds changeable and veering, mutable
As Showers are in Spring.—Inconstancy
The Mask of habile Wits to cover in
Passions of Thought too deep.—Far Pensiveness
Like some dark Crystal Spring that bubbles up
Refreshing chilly Draughts to fevered Brows.
Loosen these Guiles then on his Stubbornness
Until it melt and give, the frowning Walls
Crumble beneath your potent Armoury;
Through breached Defences, Barriers broken down,
Reenter on your own, and repossess
The Rebel Fortalice—your Husband's Heart.

ACT I. SCENE 4.

Craon.—My Soul is full of Apprehensions. I am sick
With Fears that ruthless as dumb Hounds that follow,
Follow, and give no Tongue.
My hunted Thoughts
Are through harsh Ways pursued, discomfited.
What is 't that comes
At the dark Portal stays, and heavy Steps

Lie on the Threshold ?

Plucking at the Latch
Whose Shadow glooms across my heavy Mind ;
Whose Footfall is 't, these Tremors of the Sense
Announce, yet shudder at ?

I do not know !
I do not know what strange Disaster comes,
Or what unlooked for Fortune !

Lonely Heart,
Thy World's a Thing of Glass, whose Images
Are but as fragile as fallacious,
As Faces in a Mirror.

Ay, they pass,
And are distorted so and perish, when
The frowning Clouds that are Men's Minds do meet
And shatter them !

De la River. Ah ! Sire of Craon,
We have indeed a heavy Task in Hand
To order you. . . .

Sir John Mercier.—Ay, sir, to order you,
And by the King's Behest, that you avoid
His presence and his Service utterly !

Craon.—On what Occasion, sir ?

Sir John Mercier. I was not bid
To tell you that.

De la River. Sir, we do pity you
With all our Hearts, to see Nobility
Abased in this wise.

Sir John Mercier. Speak for yourself, my lord ; I do not so
Nor yet miscall our Task a heavy one.

Sir John de Bueil.—Nor I in very Truth.

Craon.—I thank you for your gentle Courtesy, lord de la River.

Lord of Dervaux.—The Duke of Orleans doth, without Resource
You from his House and Company (we're bid to say)
Reject and banish.

Craon. 'Tis for all my Pains
A worthy Payment. Ay, but hear you this !
This Payment for long Service, long Fidelity ;
This Payment that ye tender I reject ;
'Tis base as Dross is, false, corrupt as Hell,
No true Mint coined such Words—but Forgery
Of noble Purposes, Dishonesty
Hath uttered them !
Ah ! marvel ye
To hear harsh Answer to a Prince's Word,
Meet to be taen with Awe, and bated Breath,
Submiss Humility, meek Patience, fawningly,

But 'tis not so, for these are Qualities
Resolve their Substance from the inmost Being
The Treasure House and Sanctuary of the Mind,
Whose native Liberty and sole intrinsic Force
Shall in free Commonwealth unto itself
Admit no alien Lord save Cowardice
Or Abjectness of Spirit counsel so,
But from deep Faith and true Allegiance
Pays all its willing Breath in Loyalty
With open Hands—to render Tribute so
Unchecked—unhindered in Devotion,
Till niggard Thoughts, self Interest, Carefulness
Balk it of Action.

O, then, be assured
It is not Words can make or unmake Man,
Your harsh Names have no Power to hurt my Soul
Which like a steadfast Beacon o'er great Seas
Shines on unchanged to guide and save,
Undimmed, ablaze! O, there are here
Amazement, Wrath, unconquerable Scorn
Of such a base Betrayal—A poor Heart
That fears the Face of Shame, yet shall not stoop
To deal ignobly.

I cry you Mercy, ay;
This Anger chokes me!

Sirs, proceed—
Divulge your Purport, make an End, begone,
Relieve mine Eyeballs of your hated Sight,
Messengers of Evil, and exultant openly
For Ruin that ye foster promulgate.
Black Carrion Fowl that flee before the Wind,
That bears the pestilential Vapours hence.
T' obscure the Sun, and o'er his glowing Disk
Spreading a filmy Shade of coppery Scum—
Betoken intempestive Turbulence
Of Earth and Air. . . .
The Hour before the Eclipse,
When Nature glooms and scowls, or peevishly
Draws back a Space, reverberating Threats,
Whose clammy Dews, like Tears unviable,
Thicken perturbed the spiral shifted Heat
With dusky Eddies, till the hornèd Orb
Grows into Darkness and his Crown is set
In Blackness as in Night!
Mad is he
That pins his Fancy to a Weathercock,
His Faith's Devotion to the unfructuous Sea,
In Devastation changeless, changing else
From all its Boundaries eternally.
O, bitter Sky, beneath whose steely Glare,

All Ill is worked unhindered—where nor Finger stirs
On wrongful Purpose unobserved—that's unapproved !
Or are our Woes a Pastime unto those
That sit above and mock our Feebleness ?
Had iron Fate a Heel to crush the proud,
And Pains to daunt the cruel, or Remorse
To change to Pity all that base or mean
Breeds in the Oppressor's Heart a Bitterness
Of Gall and Verjuice ! Had but Sleep a Balm,
Could Minds distraught Forgetfulness possess
To banish unatoned the gnawing Ills
Of present Envy, fears that leave undone
The Heart beleaguered !
Empty Dust of Time,
Scattered beneath the Chariot Wheels of Fate,
Play out the poignant piteous Escapade
Of make believe. Untamed at least report
One not your Suppliant now nor ever shall
Stoop Knee submiss before the Oppressor's Wrong,
Nor Heart magnanimous forbid to beat
To his accustomed Measure ; proud indeed,
That Wrongs accumulate, but still the Soul
Break never, though you bind your Fetters where you will !

Act 2. Scene 1.

Ante-room in the Hotel de St. Pol. Great door leading into banqueting Room: above gallery. Craon disguised as Sorcerer.

1st Courtier.—More Light here, Fellow.

Servant. With a good Will, sir.
If it lay in our Power, but we're let
So to oblige ye, for the King's Esquire,
'Twas but a Moment since, hath charged us straitly
Dout all the Cressets. (Exit *Servant.*]

1st Courtier Plague upon him.
Ho la, what's this? Is this to match our Gloom,
This Swarthiness of Egypt, this Magician?

2nd Courtier.—He seems bent down with Eld, and through his hoary Beard
Mutters a frightful Spell.

3rd Courtier. He'll turn you to an Ape
Since you play Chess so well, and ye who prate
Into three, four, five chattering Pies. Beware.

Craon.—Beware.

1st Courtier. Doth the old Scarecrow threaten?
What Insolence is this?

2nd Courtier. He that doth threaten
And not performs must ever Forfeit pay.

3rd Courtier.—Ay, for Ensample, tell a merry Jest.
2nd Courtier. Or let him kiss the best
Beloved and fairest Lady.
1st Courtier.—Nay, that's too good for him. Blindfold him rather.
And who hath touched him let him prophesy.
3rd Courtier.—Nay, let him sing a Song.
2nd Courtier. A Song—a Song.
Craon. Did not Alexander
Fire Persepolis, and yet Alexander
Revenged but others' Wrongs. Ay, ay, my masters; ay,
I'll sing to you.

[*Craon employing the art of a ventriloquist, makes each verse appear to proceed from one of the Courtiers, who protest, and finally retire in dismay.*]

CRAON'S SONG.

Flow rolling Tide, your Burden bear
Safely and swiftly to the End.
A fickle Mistress trusts her Messenger,
Entrusts to you her chosen Friend.
Safely and swiftly to the End
Carry what France's Wife doth send.

3rd Courtier (interrupting.)—Oh! Oh! a Scurvy Song! A very foul-mouthed Minstrelsy!

It is not Death that takes this Way,
For some poor Creature eased of Strife.
Such a fair Huntress scents a living Prey,
Quaffs to fling down the glowing Cup of Life.
On your dark Tide with Presage rife
Carry the Gift of France's Wife.

Carry it truly, and return no more
To claim your Guerdon as a Bravo does.
'Tis Plaster meet to remedy a Sore,
And end at least the Utterance of Woes.
So, peaceful after agonising Throes
Follow the Course the she Wolf shows.

There comes a Period in Life's Tourneying
When to the Laggard, beggared of all Hope,
Despoiled of his poor Portion, Trustfulness,
Dishevelled in the Dust, torn, beaten, robbed,
The Balance changes.

Fickle Fortune's Flare
Shows the proud Conqueror like a Thing of Straw

Go down beneath his Lance. In empty Worlds
Of Shadow he alone is Flesh and Blood,
Pursues and vanquishes. The glistering Spear
Hight Bitterness of Soul among the Press
Of warring Puppets flickers Levin like
To level Heads into the common Dust
As Mowers' Sickles do the standing Corn,
Torn from his Throne the gilded puppet King,
Tarnished his tinsel Glories. . . .

[*K. Charles passes disguised as wild man of the woods* (*ourang-outan*) *in close-fitting garment, smeared with pitch and covered with tow. Courtiers attend him similarly attired and chained.*]

His Crown imperial he disfigures,
Treads under tramples in the Dust, and all
That made his Greatness once is thus converted
To his Dishonour.

[*Throughout the scene the Masqueraders continue passing and repassing; led by King Charles and his wild men. In turn Sir Yvain de Foix, the Queen, and the Duke of Orleans approach Craon* (*disguised as an Egyptian*) *to enquire of the Future.*]

MASQUERADER'S NIGHT PIECE.

Flit, merry Moth. The Night Air hangs
Murk on the chiselled Ground. The silver Ire,
Reddening to baleful Fire,
Of the distempered Moon, like gleaming Fangs
(Where thou on leathern Wing
Art from the shrouded Depths withdrawn),
On chill and dewsprent Lawn,
Ill omenèd, ill presaging,
Pierceth the Heart of Night with mortal Pangs.

Lo! all the Leaves before the slight Wind driven
Amid the soundless Dusk incessantly,
Like wandering Thoughts that for awhile have thriven
And now are lost, and wretchedly must sigh,
And with their Murmur and thy noiseless Flight,
Reiterate the Sadness of the Night---

These murmur, and their Anguish is not dumb
As mine that hangs upon the Heart of thee
Craving in secret, lest its Sorrow come
To mar the Silence, and imploringly
(Whence Harshness of Despair dissevers me)
Break in, upon the Night's Tranquillity.

More slowly yet, ye Coursers of the Night.
In the far Distances bewilderingly
The Exhalations of the Marsh alight
Toss in a Sea of Fire, as I on thee,
O Sadness and O Dark, am borne in Flight.
And ever bitter Waves go over me.
O lente currite Noctis Equi.

More slowly yet, for now the waning Hour
Draws to its Ecstasy, and I in vain
Strained to th' Extremity of failing Power,
Fainting, heartbroken, in Night's Danger taen,
Discern amid the Tremors of the Thicket shower
The haunting Nightingale's diviner Pain.

Craon.—What is it you desire, fair sir, of me ?
Yvain (*disguised as wild man, and chained*).—They told me that you could one's Fortune tell.
Craon.—Ay, sir, they told you true. As easily
As merry Hucksters reckon up their Gains
At Eventide when busy Markets close
And all draw homeward, can I calculate
As it doth please me that great Harvesting,
That changing Fortune in Man's Garner plies.
Was the Seed good and all the Sowing true ?
Doth the fair Springtime precious Dews bestow ?

The glowing Sun his golden Colour give ?
Is 't not enough ? And doth the Harvest flourish ?
Who can tell ?
Perchance at Heart it rots though fair to view,
And when at last th' untimely Frosts befall
Is shed and blackened.
Yvain.—Good Fellow, you delay, you'd see your Fee
Here's Gold to plaster up these Platitudes.
Craon.—Ah ! pardon me, fair sir, your Gold I'll spend
In a good Season. Meantime, pardon me.
Into the dead Bones of the Past I'll pry
At your Command or with an eager Eye,
The gnawing Tooth of future Age discern.
But Silence Silence still, while in the Stone
I gaze intent, whereto the Pool of Time
With Froth of flying Days, its Ripples dark
Of dire Events in dusky Eddies throws.

I see two Brothers of a noble House
(And one was nobly born)—So prosperously
They grew and throve as two bright Flowers might
In some fair Garden where the Husbandman
Knows not Discrimination nor Difference,
But with an equal Hand doth foster all,

Loving alike the Poppy and the Rose.
And then if this bright Crystal tell me true,
It chanced the Poppy, watched the Rosebud grow,
And draw all Eyes toward him.—Such a Hue
As shows in princely Favours.—Odours such
As load the Air with Largess.—Added Thorns
To warn unwary Fingers.—Touch me not.—
And thou, poor Poppy, pranked out royally,
Flaunting in Gold and Scarlet every Day,
Yet Sport of vagrant Breezes—scattering
Thy flimsy Petals to the common Earth,
Must stand and mark the Rose triumphally
Unfold her glowing Heart, while Envy gnawed
At thine. Soon will the Winter come, thou thought'st
Harsh Rime and bitter cutting Winds abate
That Haughtiness! The Winter comes indeed.
There went a Whisper to the Husbandman,
Kiss not the Rosebud, Goodman Gardener.
For in its Cup there lurks a deadly Bane,
Its sweetest Savour kills—the burdened Sense
Beneath the Poison fails.

O, dark Suspicion,
Like noxious Weed to baneful Issue grown
And monstrous Growth!

The dreaded Southern Wind

Stirs scarce the Leaves at first.—Unnatural Calm
Broods heavy over all.—Hushed Silence swathes
With stifling Stillness all the heaving Earth.—
Natures a Mute, all Ears, no Tongue.—
Until
All of a sudden that Stagnation breaks
Into a whirling Spout of horrid Cries,
Loud Clamours of lost Souls—dumb Thunderings
Of unleashed Demons—Shriek outvying Shriek,
Till all the Mountains seem to rock and stir,
Shuddering to their Foundations—the great
Universe,
Like to some mighty Monster in Death Throes
Breathes forth its throaty Pangs. The dying Sun
Obscured with Gore and Murk, like some great Eye
Gleams in a fitful Anger.—Last the Night
Blots out the World with Tears and Agony.
And ever thou like some dark Shadow stood
At the Oppressor's Side, and checked the Cry
Of Mercy; aye, and steeled the Heart;
Clothed all the Soul with Iron, buttressed up
All Doubts with Adamantine Cruelties,
Slaying to check the Clamour of the Slain.
So measured up thy Brothers' Bread, his Tears—
Counted his Anguish, reckoned up his Sighs,

Meted most Clerklywise that dread Account,
Nathless to which thou'rt Debtor and shalt pay,
Ay, to the uttermost, with Shame and Tears,
For all his Tears and Blood. Bind on the Chains,
O precious Captive.—Don the burial Shroud
With thine own Fingers.—At thy Funeral
Thyself be chiefest Mourner.—Measures move,
Hectic yet jocund.—Featly Masquer tread
The last of Mummeries.—Death's Saraband.—
Flit, merry Moth, which once as Larva battened
Upon a brother's blood.—From scorching Flames
Guard well thy precious Wings—from scorching
Flames. . . .

MASQUERADERS' SECOND SONG. "THE DIRGE OF LOVE."

Seek not to tune the Silver Lyre
Unto an angry martial Note,
Whose Echoes breathe the Soul's Desire,
And Life on Passion's Sea afloat,
That Sea whose Tides and Currents move
To one wild Music which is Love!

The hollow Reed must bear along
Vain Hopes and Fears, dead Memories—

All these the Theme of one sad Song,
The Burden of it human Sighs—
And through it all, "Too late, too late,"
The cruel clamorous Note of Fate.

The Melodies of Winds and Streams,
Songs all unsung yet passing sweet,
The Lilts that riot in our Dreams,
And lend a Pace to weary Feet—
All these and more their Measure move
The Burden and the Dirge of Love.

[*The Queen approaches, and questions Craon in dumb show.*]

Craon.—Once was an Empress, to the Crack of Doom
That peered across the dizzy Brink of Fate,
Dallied with Fire, toyed with Noisomeness,
'Till from the Dust engendered, fed with Flame
Arose a Serpent Shape whose Touch was Death,
And yet she faced it—yet with Beauty sought
To match its Foulness, with Caresses strove
To loose the tightening Coils. Till Lip to Lip at last,
And Heart to Heart. . . .
Ah! better thus than with Satiety
Wilt into Age—Waxing with Age Contempt,
Watch spread on every Face—Note Looks askance,

Ill covered Gestures, Hatred's gleaming Eye
Scorn's dark Grimace, and bitterest of Woes,
Remembrance of dead Pleasures' Withering.
This Road was set with Flowers as a Gin,
Medleys of Blossoms fair and pleasant Sins,
The Seed of bitter Griefs—that Memory
Causes to sprout and proffer Leaves anon.
Occasion blows the subtle Gale that fans
Those tender Branches—Tears their Waterer
Of surfeited Regrets and vain Disgust.
But when the Autumn comes and Life's lush Leaves
Rot under Foot, a Fungus Growth is bred
Of pale and speckled Things, vile and obscure,
As of dead Passions Crime engendered is
Mordant of Tongue and Harbourer of Death.

Doth the long Story of these Pains appal
Thy Heart? Wait but a while, and see
The Upas Tree of Sin unfold anew
Unfaltering Buds of Crime, and crimson Fruit,
Laden with Death. The very Air shall kill.
See in the topmost Branches sits a Fowl,
Obscene, abhorred, and rears her hateful Brood,
Beneath a Wolf doth raven.—Slavering Jaws
All messed with bloody Foam contend in vain

With her that sits above—The Vulture Queen—,
Queen Vulture by the Day, She Wolf of Night,
Giver of Night to many, Ah! there waits
A long and weary Vigil after Day,
The Morrow's not for thee nor Rest by Night.
Thy Fates in some dark silent History
Still ply their shining Loom—The Warp and Woof
Are plain to see, but still the Patterning
Unfixed abides—The crooked Fingers twist
The gleaming Tissue—Swiftly Pictures grow
From torn and broken Lines—Dark Purpose spreads
Apace upon the Web—Grey Patches flow
And flush to Crimson—Glittering golden Wires
Are wrought to pregnant Meanings—To and fro
A gleaming Tinsel wakes up Nothingness
To ravel at the End.
The Threads are snapped,
The glowing Colours fade—The Light goes out—
All wears Death's Livery of Sanguine Sable—Blood
and Black.
A dark, dark Night, and Murder in the Night!
O lamentable Tale of dreary Years
Of Spoil and Rapine—See the Torches flash
Like some wild Maenad's Hair thirsting for Blood.
Ay! how the Torches flash! Adown her Path

Aye Carnage rages—Ever flickering Flames
Light up the Nights of ruined Country-sides.
Of pain and Death a Welter all. O, loathsome
Thing,
That ravenest and spoil'st, forget to live
Since living makes to perish. Sleep can yield
Philtres of Henbane, black Hyoscyamus,
Mandrake's unhallowed choicest Brew—Surcease
Of all Life's Burdens.
(These be Creatures born
Of Nox and Erebus tottering to Chaos).
Clanking of Rivets, Brazen Fetters off,
Off Bonds that should bind, bitterest
Uneasy Writhings the Worm Conscience makes.
In vain.
The healing Night must end. The Morning breaks,
The cruel Face of Day discovering all
Failures, Ineptitudes, Wrong still invincible;
Through empty Spaces of the Wind swept World
The angry Call of Morn re-echoes. . . .
Clarion shrill
Scatters the Shadows, the hushed Murmuring,
The Mother Notes of Night. The Daylight grows,
The bitter Light of Things discovering all.
With rolling clustered Cloud Wrack threateningly,

Your Splendours menace—all your Grandeur bodes
Chill at the Gloaming, bleaker Eventide.
Death, like a darkling Gull, still hovering o'er
Your finest Mountain Slopes, thick set with Vines,
Your pleasant Champaign Country rich with Corn.
A Fire in the Vines! A Cry by Night!
Cold, it grows cold. Let's gather round the Blaze.
What Matter though it spread so we be warm.
Lapping with vivid Tongue and lambent Lips,
The Plains scarred Surface—rearing, snaky Lengths
Athwart th' Horizon. . . .

Gloomy Night of Time,
Oblivion's tideless Sleep to wallow in.
Wilt thou not close the Bargain? No. Then barter on
Honour and Reverence against the Dregs
Of nameless Villainies. In full Exchange
To the four Winds of Heaven hallowed Chastity,
Torn up and scattered as a worthless Thing.
Merit and Virtue set a Main against,
With Stakes of Lust, unbridled Prodigality
To beggar Lydian Kings—Incestuous Loves—
Hates as unnatural—impious Revellings—
All Vices Nature knows or Hell can hold

To weigh the Balance down. No Reckoning!
Set on the Hazard all the Commonweal
And scruple not the Cost. Laugh them to Scorn
That prate of future Vengeance, yet at Heart
Some Day ——!

MASQUERADER'S THIRD SONG.

Dissolve Delays—all Dallyings break—
The Sun that gilds your Weather
Is but a Meteor Light to wake
Hopes vain elusive ever.
And Love's Undoing,
Still pursuing,
Thy Soul escapeth never.

These Flowers smell they ne'er so sweet,
Are none too sweet decaying,
And there's a fate that none would meet
To wait upon Delaying.
All Seasons have
Their Summer's Prime,
And then, alas! too swiftly comes—harsh
Winter's Rime.

O dream athwart the sylvan Shade
Of prosperous To-morrows.

Of Days enriched like Plenty's Horn
With clustering Grapes, and Laughter made
To heal or banish Sorrows.
On such a Day from Sea Foam born
Her Feet on glistening Wavelets laid
Idalian Aphrodite rose.
And though your Vision ere it blows,
Your Dream unmade,
Ere it was said,
Shall turn to leaden Sorrows.
Yet grave or sad,
The Way she had,
Your Heart unthinking borrows.

The Winds, and aye, the Waters have
A never changing Motion.
But Life's brief Stream, its Course once run,
Engulfed the boundless Ocean,
Makes but a Parody of what it was,
A Thing, sans Sense, sans Motion.

The Duke of Orleans approaches, and questions Craon in dumb show.

Craon.—Most noble Lord, I see portrayed herein
So many Shifts and Changes, that Design
Seems all awry in a bewildering Maze,
Of anxious Passages, dark lurking Holes,
Your Fortune, like the Sun i' the dying Fall,

Glitters in Species, yet confers no Warmth—
Or Fruit that falls half-ripened from the Wall—
Misfortune feeds upon such choicer Stuff.
In some dark Corner of your Ways there lurks
A Street, that by one narrow Entrance shows
Blank Walls, and overhung an iron Door
That opens rarely. 'Tis a noisome Den,
But the rich Moonlight floods the empty Place,
Changing to Beauty trivial Things and mean.
Shining as it has shone this thousand Years,
And will a thousand more—unmoved, unchanging.
O'er Bones of murdered Men to welcome in,
Like a false Hound his Master's Murderer.
Or is there laid a Corse in that dark Way,
Or haply Clouds that flit across the Moon
Bewray my Vision? Is 't a Shadow comes
That wears your Features—there beside the Door
At that fell Portal stays—perceives the Dead,
Shakes to the pallid Skies despairing Hands.
Like the gaunt Trees that fling their ebon Boughs,
When bitter Winds shriek through them to th'
Abyss.
Ah! hapless Shade, that art but as the Wind
That dost despair and sigh, and canst not speak
Nor yet be seen by purblind mortal Eyes.

In Bitterness thou sad Phantasm, fade—
Let all grow dark again. Then suddenly,
With clangorous Movement, thronging Forms assail
'Mid flickering Torches the unhallowed Spot.
Like seething Midgets scatter, then draw nigh
With anxious Haste to raise the shapeless Form.
A Ray of Moonlight bursts the inky Cloud—
The Face. . . .

Duke. Tell me whose is the Face?

Craon.—Like thine it is, the murdered Man's.

Duke.—Whose, then, the Form that brooded o'er the Dead?

Craon.—A Wraith it was that brooded and despaired,
Because it hated and was impotent.
Deep i' the Womb of the Future Vengeance lies.
Forsaken Wraith, your Murderer too shall yield,
Prone on the common Earth beneath the Feet
Of Serf and Lackey—fearless at the last,
To reck no longer this World's Blame or Praise.
Tranquil at last, though after troubled Days,
All Debts accompted for, all Credits paid,
Called in all Usury, and satisfied
With Deaths convincing Currency.
Now pacified all Quarrels, every Grief,

Warring Ambition, tedious Rivalry.
Nothing shall vex again that mighty calm
Till the last Trump that wakes the Sluggard Dead,
That like the placid Rim of some great Lake
Mirrors unmoved at once and magnifies
By its chill Irony the warring Airs.
Clouded by Distance Earth born Vapours rise
In calm Aloofness. Now the Heavens weep
Great frosty Tears. She sheds that flinty Woe
As Type and Symbol of Heart's Bitterness.

Duke.—I do not know you yet your Visage serves
To bring to Mind one I would fain forget.
Craon.—It is not wise, fair sir, to struggle so
Against these Intuitions of the Sense,
That by the Soul's mere Light can freely show
The Microcosm in Entirety.
Its devious Alleys and Meanderings,
Its Corridors and deep resounding Bays,
The Pit perchance where lurking Dangers lie,
To which the outward Man's purblind.
Duke.—You speak me strangely, sir! What is your
Name?
Craon.—I have forgot it! It was foully wronged!

Duke.—If you were wronged, the King himself you may
Require to right you, who is Justices' Source.
Craon.—Nay, I'll not brook that any Mortal should
My Supplication scorn, or grudgingly
Some Pittance, or poor Remedy bestow.
Duke.—If there be one has wronged you in God's Name,
Be satisfied that he full Reparation make.
Craon.—Good cannot cope with Evil, nor my Wrongs
Consort with Reparation.
There are Hurts
Bite deeper in the Flesh than can be cured
With such Medicaments.
Ay! bite so deep that never Power may
Potent soe'er restore one's Trust in Man.
Duke.—Ah! now I know you. Vision seems to flow
Into strange Wizard Shapes of Men and Beasts,
Now one, now either.
So Division rules
Over my crowded Thoughts. Flits now a Mask
Of grinning Wolf Fangs o'er the placid Brow
Of the pale Dreamer. 'Tis a Flash, 'tis gone.
Oh! turn your Eyes away, they sear my Soul
As doth the Lightning Eyes. In naked Length

Bare Peaks and jagged Heights stand out revealed.
No Crevice but the unpitying Glare makes plain,
unveils it.
And through my Mind there flows the Rush o' the
Storm,
The Battling of the Winds, the driving Rain,
And all the panting Haste of Messengers
Unto some fruitless, necessary End.

(*Exit Duke.*]

Craon.—So fare you well. And yet there is a Power
More just than his King's Justice—ay, more true
And certain in its End—inexorably set
To remedy th' Oppressions of this World—to dis-
possess
Possession—to discrown all crownéd Things.

[*Observing the storm.*]

Now all the angry Face of Heaven lowers
Its weighty Presage. All the Skies are wrought
Into a polished Shield, whose dusky Rim
Reflects grim Aspects, and the writhing Forms
Of grisly Spectres seem to whirl therein
On 's grey and ashen Face. Yet inwardly
Glows an infernal Fire.
Heaven's Fury swirls
Lurid and turbid round a Peak of Stars,

Like Islands in an all-submerging Flood
Ready to perish—yet despairingly
Glitters a pallid Gleam athwart th' opaque
And cavernous Cowl of Darkness.
Doth some wan Eye
From that far Orb regard my Wretchedness ?
Does some proud Heart in Sympathy reply
Bright Tears for those I shed ? No more for me
Complaints and empty Pain. Let my Despair
Find Armour for my Wrongs, and make Response
To those that hate me—Here am I,
A Champion armed—
with sable Panoply,
Of unforgotten Hatreds unprovoked,
And darkened Plates dulled with the Dint of Wars,
All waged in Treachery. False Ambuscades,
Where Brother Brother slew, and secret Blades
Drank of the Life Blood of outwitted Foes.
Indignant Heart, take Courage from these Wrongs,
To lay all piteous Thoughts of Mercy by—
Pile such a Holocaust of bleeding Woes
As shall with Gore and Flame, and drifting Smoke,
Make a great Scene to which all Eyes must turn
To mark your Acting. If they blench with Fear,
What then ? or still revile your Deed ;

Again, What then ?
Those have not borne with you
The seven droughty Summers of Decay,
When Friends and Fortune—all the Earth's good
Fruits—
Fell rotting to the Ground, and Love itself
Withered and wilted in pale Winterings.
Oh ! it would make a Madman laugh to Tears
To contemplate the Dullness of these Fools
That leer and strut and press their antic Throng
Across a mimic Stage unknowing whence—
The Puppet cannot see the String that draws it,
Nor the Hand lurking that still draws the String,
Nor yet the darkling Brain that draws the Hand.
I will not mitigate my just Revenge
Because these Fools and Traitors cannot stomach it.
Revenge—Audacity that craves Success
And knows to seize the Moment that ensues it,
And the dark rankling Memories of Injustice done
Are mighty Music in too high a Key
For Ears so gross to comprehend its Scope—
Sweet Airs grow cloying now—clang Discords on
By such rude Steps—
to Resolution !

[*Craon relights the torches that had been extinguished by the servants at the commencement of the scene. The masqueraders re-enter: the Duke of Orleans entering from the other side, endeavours inquisitively to ascertain their identity, but is repulsed. He takes the torch which Craon hands him, and as they go out, accidentally ignites the inflammable dresses of the Masqueraders.*]

Act 2. Scene 2.

[*Scene as Act 2, Scene 1. The cries and anguish of the burning victims are heard behind during the early part of the scene: the clamour of the mob during the subsequent time.*]

Craon (*his head muffled in his dark cloak.*)—I dreamt
I trod upon the Pit's fell Brink,
And gazed into the giddy Depths below,
And saw the Atoms fly, the whirling Motes
Like Fireflies in a Dream fantastical.—
Or that deceptive Flare that on lone Marsh
The wearied Traveller yearning for Home
After long Sojourning by Sea and Land,
From Safety to Derision draws—'tis but a Step—

With such unhallowed Gleam to light me on,
As in rapt Vision from afar I saw
The elemental Dance—now circling here, now there,
That with its restless to and froing drove
Like some dark Mystic weaving deadly Spells,
My Soul to Stupefaction wherein mute,
Yet agonised it frightful Things beheld. . . .
Yvain de Foix (*behind the scene*). Save the King,
save the King!
Craon.—Powerless of Hindrance, helpless to frustrate
Some deadly Purpose.—Lo! the Steam of the Pit
Drave burning past my Brow—its ruddy Glow
Made pale my Countenance as in Despite—
Now my Soul shuddered, and thick Drops of Sweat
Dripped from my Visage—shuddering I awoke
Amid the Clamours of mad Revelling,
Phantasmagoria, charnel Masquerade,
Or Dance Macabre to which lean Forms advance
And grimly follow.—So the Glamour falls
Athwart my Sense—again the Marsh Lights burn
More redly now and dim—more heavily
The stagnant Waters moan—the thickening Ooze
Stirred to its Ebon Depths disgorging Death
Blackened and lustrous, Vestiges of Eld
Beyond the Years of Man—hoar Centuries

Piles each on other—grisly Reckoning—
Lost Generations to Futurity
As Sign Posts pointing.—
Space interminate
With mocking Challenge enigmatical—
Break, break ye Clamours, break, dissolve away
Mists of Delusion—(*pointing to the scenes and texts embroidered on the tapestry.*)
Princeps induetur Maerore et quiescere faciam Superbiam
Potentium—
Servant 1.—Help, help, the Palace burns. The King's afire!
Servant 2.—Bring Water, Water.
Servant 3. Clumsy Rascal, thou Hast overset my Budget.
Servant 2. Water, Water bring For Christ's dear Sake.—
Servant 4.—Ah! God, to hear the Groans,
They're terrible. Oh! I shall never,
Until my dying Moment, rid my Ears
Of that dire Agony.
Craon. I saw to Nothing brought
All in a Moment this World's Magnitude,
Her Grandeur's Measure in a Spark of Time

Set upon Flame and flaring to the Skies,
To yield but flickering wasted Ash of Things,
Bleached and impalpable lighter than the Air,
Hither and thither cast—the Name of King,
Of weighty Substance, Power, Preeminence.
Until at last the trifling Game played out,
The Shuttlecock of Fate tossed for an Hour,
The Hour of Pastimes past, is spurned aside.

(*Enter attendants, bearing Yvain de Foix on a litter.*)

Servant 5.—Oh ! cover it up—oh ! 'tis too terrible.
Servant 6.—Is't possible he's living yet ?
Servant 7. Ay, list the Groans.
Physician.—There is no Remedy. 'Tis idle Care,
Not all my Art availeth here.
Craon.—Methought I saw the Hungry at his Gates,
Gaunt Famine wasted, famishing unslaked
With Drouth of perilous Angers—ravening—
Patiently unforgiving—Watching Eyes aglow—
Pale, wasted Visages, and all intent
For one that tarried yet they said but voicelessly
Their Enemy Oppressor Treader out
Of Wrath's empurpled Vintage—Grapes that stain
And trickle o'er the Brim insatiate—
With suffered Changes to the heady Brew

Of pangless Luxury's besotted Sleep—
Souring at last to acrid Vinegar—
To Retribution's cold and bitter Draught.
Soldier 1.—The starving Mob are at the Doors,
Are breaking down the Gates—arm, arm in Haste—
Lest forced an Entry they should after slay
All living Souls within.
Soldier 2.—They're gone, 'tis all too late—
Soldier 3.—Save all who can (*filching plate.*)
Themselves, 'tis all they can.
Soldier 1. Then save yourselves.
Craon.—Think ye, I marked not in the Past your Hands,
Thin wasted Hands, in Supplication raised—
Heard not the whispered Curses load the Air,
Saw not the starved Eyes ever through the Gloom,
Gleam—through the Dusk of timeless Infamy—
To wait th' Avenger—heard a Whisper come
Through serried Forces ranked and palpable,
Weighty with Woes unremedied and heavy Ban
Of desperate Revenges—
Judgment on
Cruelties, Heartlessness, Ingratitude,
Denial of Justice, scornful Avarice,
Expense and Covetise and wasting Pride,

Unbridled headlong Lust—Rapacity
With all Briareus' Arms—Grossness of Wit
Pitched like a Drunkard's staggering Clumsiness',
Into Destruction, to Destruction all
Dragging in 's Fall.
Mob 1. Where are the Traitors?
Mob 2.—Show us the Traitors.
Craon. Groaning of Niobe
Of all her Brood bereft, for Princes Pomp,
The ravenous Throat of War, or Ignorance
As felly ravening, but in the Dark—
Crime's grim Excise, and Tasks of Sisyphus,
Crushing bowed Shoulders neath Injustices,
Grown grosser with Time's Passage—Wrongs as fresh,
Though after Years as at the first and fell
Inception wrought—unnatural Friendship sealed
With Gripe of fleshless Hand to Bartering
Of lordly Chances of the Game—for Rest alone—

Though bitter be the Draught, yet at the last
There is a Refuge, there a Fountain sealed
Amid the Desert Waste that Semblance fair
Of Beauties proffering from View recedes;
Life's miraged Bitterness and darkling View
Of dim Expanse, bare Plain, far-reaching Height,

Gold of the Cloud Mist veiling Silver Streams,
Valleys of winding Hopes, and Herbage green
Of pleasant Fantasies—Blasts of free Air,
Fresh Sustenance of Courage—berried Copse
And beckoning Sylvan Gloom—dim Shadowings
Of hanging Forests' Fringe—Tranquillities
Embroidered with lorn Music—Fragrancy
And Dusk of golden Days—
thou sacred Night,
Ancient of Mysteries—to all an End.

Mob 1.—Ha, Yvain, ha, now knowest thou the Pangs
We wretched bear each Day and every Day.

Mob 2.—'Twas only Yestereve when thou didst pace
—I saw—
Too slowly for thy proudly spurning Steed
Who still behind him cast the level Clods
On that long Journey whereunto thou goest
Now the last Stages.

Mob 3. Thou belike
Misread the angry Signs and marched to Triumph
Instead of paced to Death!

Mob 4. Receiving this thy Portion utterly!

[*The Masqueraders attempt to escape above, and are beset by the Mob below. The King assisted in mad, and pale as death, in silence. Then cries of "Justice, Justice."*]

Clisson.—Justice, ye will have Justice. So ye shall
Presently.
Craon.—Now are my Wrongs like Harpy Ministrants
That gorge my Flesh with Soul abhorred Food,
Too wholly cloying, satiating, gross.
The labouring Carcase of mere Ruthfulness
Writhes abjectly infirm, and doubting Awe
Creeps on my Soul anew.

[*The King shews evident signs of insanity, mopping and mowing like an ape.*]

Bishop.—What is this Tumult? Do ye not regard
The Majesty of France, the Law's Authority,
Which here your natural Prince, to whom ye owe
By God's Assignment, all Obedience,
Subjection, Meekness, Reverence, doth claim,
To be by you in Humbleness allowed
For general Peace and Governance of the Realm.

Back, back. Touch not the King lest Angels bear
From out of Heaven flaming fiery Swords,
To pierce the guilty Hand that dares assail
Him Heaven predestines your anointed Lord.
The holy Ark is Sacrilege to touch—presume it not.
Craon.—Ay, but within that former Ark was borne
Power and Knowledge—Laws diviner Truth—

Urim and Thummim for Depositary
Of Purposes yet hidden, mystical,
That Burden companied unfathomably.
Of this ye offer us
For our submiss Acceptance—this your Ark
Set in the midst of false and treacherous lords,
Vile scheming Courtiers, mitred Hypocrites.
Like the dull Moon by hollow-hearted Clouds
Obscured and garish, with a sickly Gleam
Lighting the stagnant Brim of dusky Lakes
With Osiers bordered, where no Space between
Twixt Reason and Unreason sets a Bound—
Pale visaged and capricious Lord, recall
The deadly Cark, and Care thou didst abye
When through the Wood of Mans thy Wrath thee drave
Impetuous and resistless as the Wind.
The Day was hot, and wandering Wits astray,
Too frail and scorched in Fire of Fantasy,
Dreamed Treason where none was and Page's Sleeps . . .

[*The King starts in alarm.*]

Clothed with strange Purport—deemed unheard Design
Thundered in loud Alarums at his Ear—
Perplexed, unmanned—whatever Courage lent

Of Strength and Fortitude all ebbed away—
Withered and peevish in a Pinch of Time,
Fate's Sceptre Adamant too loosely held,
And in a Pinchbeck Setting worthlessly
Jewels of Paste—Gems fraudulent—
Unlustrous Eye
To gaze at Devastation without Qualm,
Pitiful Sanction whence doth Ill unchecked
In Guise too Manifest stalk through the Land
Debasing, changing all. Uncertainty
Of Justice piling ever Debt on Debt,
Grown like the Hydra's Heads to all engulf—
With Thicket Errors through a Glass of Doubt,
Awry and twisted—Black, contorted, blurred,
False, hateful Outlines of Magnificence,
That Bitterness of Facts with Clamour harsh
Dishonours and denies—an Heritage,
Too rotten and unripe, for which the Frost
After long Glamour of mild Autumn Days,
Is come, is ready.

Courtier 1.—We're lost unless the King can speak to them.

Courtier 2.—His Wits have left him—he can never speak.

Craon.—Now as the Winds that idle Straws bestir,

Yet by the veering Vanes Direction prove,
So Blasts of Ruin do commence to blow
On breathless Follies, scattered Wantonness,
Heavy Unwisdom—masqued and hoary Age,
Burlesquing Virtue, yet grimacingly
Clothed in outrageous Obstinacy, set to do
Whatever most resolvedly must sap and stain
The Safety of the Realm, share into Tatters all
Th' embroidered Cloth of State, or draw to Prey
The Splendours of the Past, as glowing Coals
Fade to cold Ashes at the last and dead
Turn of the Night.
All bitter Chill of Dawn—
And after comes no Wakening. Ah! what Means
To spend the Tale we have of scanty Days.
Sleep on, wax gross, unmeaning, opulent
Of crowded empty Years—then that Abyss,
To which all human Hopes converge, descend,
All Aspirations tend, engulfs us bitterest
Babel of Failure, without common Tongue;
Dumb muttering World Soul, voiceful, purposeless,
Lacking the very Will for Speech, not Words to say . . .

Clisson.—'Tis he—I know the Voice—th' Arch-traitor 'tis,

Murtherous Rebel, Peter of Craon, him!

Craon. When last we met
'Twas at the Sword's Point Oliver, but now in Turn
With Golden Drops thou shalt for Scarlet then
Bleed and repay, thou Miscreant.
That States should lie
Prostrate at Feet like thine! O, rank Abuse,
It smells to Heaven!

Mob. Vengeance!
Vengeance!

[*The Duke of Burgundy enters attended.*]

Burgundy!

Craon.—Sir, the People call
On you as their Redeemer—at your Birth
Gently the Zephyr breathed, they say—the Daystar
stately shone—
Pure Wellheads gushed—the living Breath of Morn
Fresh with the Voice of Lark, with Scent of Thorn,
Saluted you—you Liberator come
To rescue captive Lands, predestined Heir
Of Peace and Concord—
thence auspiciously
Relieve this Discord, and assuage the Pangs
Of these that suffer Loss—their Wealth redeem
From the Oppressor's Hand to vivify,

Instead of cause to languish. Plenteousness
Pour on a smiling France!
Lord, this Scroll peruse
Whereon the Thefts of this ill Minister
Blacken the Pages they should rather stain
With Blood of Innocence, not Ink—wherein the Tale
Of hoarded Wealth, ill-gotten haughtily,
Spreads and devours—
where King's Treasuries
Are by a private Chest discomfited—and Coin
awash
Like Surge in sunken Ships—untold immane—
Drags as a Whirlpool down a Myriad Lives,
Lays bare a Myriad Homes, can devastate
A teeming Province with a Nod, condemn
To Death, or that than Death more terrible,
Miscallèd Life, miscallèd Clemency.
Sir, Tasks austere
Omit not hastily—the Times require
Proud Indignation, Justice undismayed,
Recrimination, ay, Revenges passionate.
Here Beggars lie
Noisome in piteous Rags—contemptible
With vext Entreaty.
[*To Clisson.*] This is only yours

This bleak and hateful Triumph, to abhor
One's proper Flesh and Blood—to circumvent
For bitter Avarice the poor, the impotent.
On you their Want of Bread, the sightless Orbs,
The festering Wounds, the Squalor, Loathsomeness,
Worst the perverted Hearts that cringe and fawn
Where they should strike or rend their Torturer
With more embittered Vengeance.

See you here,
How on this Scroll this your ill Livelihood,
With bloody Runes inscribes devouringly
From the King's Manors, sovereign Princedoms, Coin,
(All else than yours made false) red Bullion, Carcanets,
To ransom mighty Kings, imperially
Unniggard.

O, lamentable Quality of Things,
That all the World stands threaded on a Glance,
And all its Treasures as a Featherweight,
Or Thistledown before the idle Wind,
Are trapped and fallen.
That all the World beneath your Dominance
Sinks as abashed. O, Minds effeminate,
To suffer such Abuse and tamelily
Effrenate Anger suffer suffer suffer.

Burgundy.—Why how the Devil did this Sinner
come
By such a Store of Pelf ?
Craon. Ah ! what a Tale
Is here of Misery, grim Hunger, Widow's Tears,
Devouring Pestilences, ruined Habitations,
Gaunt Bones of Famine, Insolence of War,
All Items in a ghastly Reckoning,
Entituled Oliver of Clisson's Cash Account.
Ah ! break him, Lord, crush down this gilded Snake
That raises Head to menace and defy.

Burgundy.—Arrest the Sire of Clisson.
[*Going.*] Now, my lords, we shall
Take Order for the Governance of the Realm.
On us the Weal of France is laid. God grant that we
Find Strength and Wisdom to assure that same.

Craon.—Level the Balance swings !

SONGS, SONNETS, STANZAS.

SONG. "TIME IS FLYING."

"'Α σταφυλὶς σταφίς εστι, καὶ τὸ ῥόδον αὖον 'ολεῖται."
Theocritus. Idylls xxvii. 9.

Weep no more! ah! weep no more!
Lest that Nature's self beguiling,
Thy sweet Tears should mar her Smiling;
Lest thy changing Web of Sadness
Overcast her present Gladness,
At thy Sorrows vexing sore,
Yet more precious than before.

In the Heaven Stars do reign.
This thy Loss to them were Gain,
An if thy Tears, all deceiving,
Thy sweet Tears (ah! hapless Thieving)
Should, superb at such a Source,
Mingle with the heavenly Course,
Then should Lustre strange and new
Dim the Queen of Heaven, too!

Stay thy Tears, lest Earth enchanted
With such Vision passing sweet,
Fashion them, with loving Care,
To great Gems, both rich and rare,

Brighter than the Dewdrops planted
By the Gnomes indwelling there,
And haply, of their Guerdon meet
The toiling Elves unkindly cheat.

Weep no more, lest thy sweet Sorrow
Wake to Life thy falling Tears,
Lest each Drop, unthinking borrow
That sweet Image which it bears:
Then the World, all racked with Anguish,
As the deep dark Waters roar,
With eternal Voice should echo
Griefs unheard, unknown before.

Weep no more, for Time is flying,
And the Roses will be gone,
Ere thou weariest of Sighing,
Ere thy Sorrow be half done:
Sigh no more, in fancied Gloom
Smile while yet the Roses bloom,
Weep no more, for Time is flying,
Smile, lest aye thy Heart be sighing!

PASTORAL.

No more the Throstle sings in Arcady,
Who charmed to Ecstasy the silver Spring,
His Clarion Notes ring heavy now
Such Age the passing Months do bring.
No more doth Philomel her Sorrows fill,
No more the Glades re-echoing thrill,
Only the Redbreast on a Bough,
Pipeth disconsolate and shrill.

Alas! alas! that Arcady
Is hushed and mute, and nevermore
Shall Daphne tread the sounding Shore,
Or listen to the falling Sea.
Alas! alas! for Vows forgot,
And plighted Troth remembered not,
For Faith forsworn and nothing made,
For Love to Earth untimely laid.

No more with Wood Notes sweet and low
Shall Strephon move the rustic lay,
Or with a faltering Voice essay
In Phrases meet his Love to show.
He sings no more these wintry Days,
No more descants on Daphne's Praise.
For why, He hath forgot to love,
And Daphne's Tears no longer move.

No more, as in the happy Spring,
Shall all the Groves with Echoes ring,
No more shall Daphne laughing crown
With Laurel Wreath her Tresses brown,
Or gather Roses white and red
To match her Cheeks (so Strephon said).
Ah! nevermore, 'tis vain to sigh,
The Laurels fade, the Roses die.

So mortal Seasons wax and wane,
So Bliss breeds Woe, So Pleasure Pain.
Like Birds of Change fair Hopes are fled,
Like Autumn leaves lies Passion dead.
Then Winter comes, a chilling Frost
To kill the Love that lingers yet.
On cruel Seas our Bark is tossed,
On crumbling Sands our House is set.

PERVIGILIUM VENERIS.

"Cras amet qui nunquam amavit, quique amavit, cras amet."

Now Spring renews itself, Now Love undying!
With tuneful Throat now all the swift Birds sing,
Age that brings Change and Silence, Winter's Sleep forget!
Love's Pattern on Life's shifting Web is set,
Wherein with Leaves the Tree
For flowing Tresses, happily
Takes all the Rain, the Fervour of the Spring,
Late Droughts and Rime too harsh her Boughs defying,
Now Spring renews itself, Now Love undying!

Now great Dione from her Throne doth new Laws say
That shall from Myrtle Thickets prized the Nymphs deny

Her Band of Worshippers with linked Hands come—
Love lays his Arrows by, keeps Holiday,
And yet not so, for then (as reckon some),
No Festal Day for Love, his Bow laid by.
Go Nymphs, Truce is declared, Love's Truce implying,
Now Spring renews itself, Now Love undying !

Unarmed, unharming, undisguised, now, now, Love see
Love's Arrows now all scattered lie, his Fires burn harmlessly
(Now Spring renews itself, Now Love undying !),
Yet not too yarely Nymphs—so fair to view,
May yet so deadly prove as ye may rue.

Now from the distant Hills doth Love reclaim,
From lonely Woods, and Founts his Votaries
(Now Spring renews itself, Now Love undying !),
His Mother bids you here—by that loved Name,
The winged God's—his Mother bids arise,
Yet trust not faithless Love his Hurt denying.

Now must the livelong Night in merry Routs
With Cates and Wine and Song—and Flower crowned,
(The Myrtle Shade our Steps encircling round),

Be spent, for Spring renews itself, and Love undying
But now from her loved Haunts the Huntress flouts.

Let—so the Goddess bids—with Flowers heaped,
The Judgment Seat await her Sovranty.
The Graces at her Side, while Hybla pours
(Now Spring renews itself, Now Love undying!).
Her Store of Blossoms ere the Frost devours;
Whate'er of Bloom the Plains of Enna see,
With Dew and Freshness of the Springtide steeped.

Now all the pleasant Land by Pleasure spurred,
Awakes to Passion where the God of Love
First all the Pageant of the passing Hours
(Now Spring renews itself, Now Love undying!)
Beheld, and to that tender Breast allured,
And gathered up, with sweetest Kisses throve,
Nurtured with delicate Breath and the Fragrance of Flowers.

Of Gems and Flames—of Love's Heart Blood—and Fill
Of Love's dear Kisses wrought,—with Flush of Morn,—
Yet drenched with Dew that warm Spring Nights distil,

The Roses at their Heart Spring's Passion share—
(Now Spring renews itself, Now Love undying!).
Forth from their Virgin Breasts their Cinctures torn
Unwed fling off—to Fire of Crimson flare.

Doth through the Poplar Shade the Nightingale
The Hunger of the Night with Passion feed,
Nor ever with her Notes Love's Music fail?
(Now Spring renews itself, Now Love undying!).
Not Throe to Throe, but Bliss to Bliss allying
Not of a Sister's Woe, but of Love's Need.

All sings. But I, but I of Spring bereft,
Awaiting that which comes, ah! nevermore,
In silent Bitterness as that of Yore
Ill-fated City, which the God had left,
As unsung perishing, my Amyclae
In Time and Change and fallen Fortune see.
Ah! would that forth and far as Swallow flying,
My Heart might find the Spring, the Love undying!

ORPHEUS.

Lo! lovelorn Philomel, her woful Plaint
To rustling Woods in softest Music tells,
While far and wide her mournful Sighing swells,
And mouthless Echoes mock her Accents faint.
Ah! hapless Orpheus, such was thy Despair,
Thy fruitless Toil, thy Tears, thine Anguish Sore.
Such cruel Memories at thy Bosom tore,
When in the murky Night thou forth did'st fare
Through misty Realms unknown, where Mortal ne'er
Attained before, nor ever shall again.
Ah! mournful Triumph, thus to vanquish Fear
And drown all Sorrows in one mortal Pain;
Making een Death as naught, a Matter small:
Death conquers all but Love—Love conquers all.

———

"WITH THREE VOLUMES OF SHAKESPEARE."

Three Myrtle Leaves that from a Garth derive,
Wherein that Tree that did our Loss begin
With Fruit erstwhile too harshly sweet—to win
A Happiness, too frail, too fugitive,
Burgeons unperished yet—for Guerdon give
One passing Moment, one, to dream therein
Of those dead Lips that sang—of Thoughts that live,
Of Life's brief Drama played—Death, Sorrow, Sin,
Of Hopes and Fancies in a Garden fair,
Love unrequited, wildest Phantasy,
And vain Regrets that never may depart.
Then darkly in this Page—in those more clear
Behold the Link that mars Mortality
And mocks at Time—the changeless human Heart.

MERCHANDISE.

When of their Merchandise Men make their Mart,
And prate of that they buy and sell and how,
I wonder. Ah! I wonder if they know
To what Conclusions brought, when played their Part
All their Endeavours and Occasions go!

Despite your Skilfulness, your cunning Wit,
Oblivions Tides o'er all your Courses flow,
Your fairest Fortunes by Fate's Frosting bit
Must shed their Silvern Leaves, their Gilded Fruit.
All your proud Vauntings, like the Winter's Snow,
Or Summer Swallow that must soon take Wing,
Are brought to silent Nothings. Truth not mute
Of Love, Faith, Hope, her green Leaves still doth show
Her Lilies and her Roses blossoming.

THE ENIGMA.

Each Sun that travels on his wonted Way,
For those more blest the Harbinger of Joy,
For me brings nothing else than sad Annoy,
And weary Waiting, yet may serve to say
How short my season is, and how Life's Day,
Brief as the Flowers are, like them to die,
With Longings burdened, wears itself away,
And wastes from Morning to the sunset Sky;
Where now the Darkness threatening makes Essay,
To whelm with Clouds my Sun's Propinquity,
With all his empty World of sight and Sound,
And thus forgotten sweep my Doubts away,
Here too bewildering an Enigma found,
One vast, unending, and unanswered, Why.

SONG. TO CÆLIA.

In Cælia's Face my Heaven is,
Wherein her Eyes like Planets shine
And gleam athwart my cloudy Skies,
With Radiance fitful, yet divine.
Thy Soul above the World is set
Above the vain World's Fume and Fret.

When I regard thy golden Prime,
So dazzled as the Sun doth Eyes,
I envy Phæthon his Crime,
And though to fall, yet fain would rise.
Alarms and Fears me little move,
I burn as he did, but for Love.

To follow Love, yet not to find,
This is the Smart, the woful Pain.
Ah! Pain indeed! If thou wert kind,
For me the Year would turn again
And burgeon forth a second Spring,
Love's Spring that doth no Winter bring.

———

EGYPT.

Thy Power is fallen—Quenched the Fire of yore—
The Blossom faded that was once so fair,
Thy Gods are Dust thou didst adore,
And Paradise is chill and bare.
Yet still from out their pictured Tomb,
From out the Depths of ancient Night,
Thine Ashes yield their flickering Light,
Thy fading Glories dimly loom.
Still may thy Shadows silent keep
Faint Memories of Dirges low,
Of wailing Music sad and slow,
    Of Lore as deepest Ocean deep.
Thus while the Nations o'er thee roar,
Sleep softly on—for evermore.

NOEL.

Whenas through Desert Waste and weary Wold,
The wise Men toiled on their appointed Way,
And nightly gazing up saw Night unfold
A Promise far more glorious than the Day,

Which to the Eye of Faith did Day benight,
And all confounding burn with brighter Rays.
Saw no more in the Day, but only Night,
Until a Night be made the first of Days,
Until the Day Star in the East appear,
And Day unto the humble Hearts that wait,
For Sin bring Mercy, made articulate,
For Blindness Sight, and Peace for carking Care;
Until the Judge, our Intercessor, plead,
The Priest (himself the Victim) bleed.

A PLEA.

Could you but Know what Time essayed my Verse,
Your Merits (ah! in Verse too ill defined)
To portray forth, While still from worse to worse
My feebler Efforts from the Truth declined.
For standing mute when they should speak their
Mind,
So let these plead as they may Pardon find,
And you may pity, as you ever do,
All that for Dumbness may not Pity sue.
And tell it to all as all may thence imply

Upon what sweet Foundations Virtue lies,
How rich adorned, how decked with what rare Dew
Of precious Charity, sweet Courtesies.
In short to show, and that more perfectly,
Not you by these portrayed, but these in you.

SIR JOHN ELIOT.

Now Earth that holds which Interest ne'er bound,
And Death refetters that which Gaolers Thrall,
Could never conquer, for the Spirit found
Freedom, inalienate, heroical.
The ready Tongue is dumb which never all
The Might of Princes daunted, and the Eye
Sightless, that could through cloudy Hours descry
Of better Hopes a brighter Dawn befall
On Things most base. Through Suffering, through Shame,
The noble Heart that hath not thought amiss,
The Truth, the Courage, all the cause confest,
That cost him Freedom, Friendship, Fortune, Fame.
The End attained that still for Others is
That they through him as he in them be blest.

ALGERNON SIDNEY.

Through the long Years when all around he saw
His Ideals levelled to the common Earth.
Saw Fortune's fickle Wheel perform its Round,
And all he fought for lost without a War.
It was a Martyrdom. Thy native Strength
Thou needst it all to bear those Years of Pain,
But be of Courage, for be sure at length
The Hand that brought thee shall bring back again
From out the Wilderness into the Ways
That need thy Love, thy Sacrifices. Then at last
Crown with Death's Eloquence the silent Past,
With suffering all you suffered. "Shall you rise,
Sir," he says,
You that have all endured, all Things won,
"Never, ah! never, until the last great Day.
Strike on!"

STORM-WRACK.

O ! Cynthia, how thy gentle Tides dost lead,
And Winds that drive their Courses to and fro,
Which were they from thy sweet Dominion freed,
Might such a ruthless cruel Rage outblow,
As should (their Limits due outstepping all)
In one Destruction all Things overthrow.
Ah ! Queen, the Sea and Hours own thy Thrall,
Bitter or sweet beneath thy Sway they flow.
Now harsh, tumultuous, full of Rage or Scorn,
Doubts, Angers, Patience, Fears—a motley Rout.
Now clamourous, Echo filling—now discordantly
In proud triumphant Riot moving—now forlorn;
While through the Storm Wrack thy pale Face looks
out
Silent, amid the Clouds that pass thee by.

SYRINX.

Deaf Ears that hear no more the plaintive Note
Of rare Wood music ye were used to know,
For whom no longer in the Brake remote,
Lilies and Asphodel of Fancy blow.
Dull Eyes that mark no more the Phrygian Creed
Of that wild Company in Sport renewed,
While through the starry Eve the Maid pursued
From Death draws Melody, and as a Reed
Pipes faintly in pale Dreams till these again
Dissolve and drift away on the rough Wind;
Harsh, broken Echoes, vaporous and torn
Cloudy Illusions, proud faint faiths outworn,
Muttering shrilly round Peaks undefined,
And always—through the Mists—the driving Rain.

———

SUFI.

Not Poppy Jasmine, no, nor yet the Rose,
That with its Sweetness cloys the Sense away.
Not Violets, nor the Hyacinth that may
Through Centuries its Sadness never lose;
Not these the Garland that we twine to-day,
Nor yet that festal Wreath the Revel Knows—
(Such fresh Caresses feverish Heats allay)—
Not these the Flowers our Persian law allows,
But from a Thousand, this the subtle Way
Midst barren Deserts such rare Leafage grows,
Such gemmy Buds each burning Summit shows,
As like the fabled Bird have Voice to say—
This is the sharpened sombre Edge of Things,
And Fate's grim Knife that cuts at Kings.

NIGHTINGALES.

O ! Ecstasy of Music, dear Delight,
That from a feeble Throat such Passion pours,
Till very Pain our Ears enraptures quite
Made sad sans Reason, glad without a Cause.
Ah ! what's the Key that thus the Heart unlocks,
To yield such wonder, such amazed Applause ?
One 'tis that well in Thought may give us Pause.
That dusky Age old Trees, and harsh lean Rocks
Should pour such Treasures forth. Why, you might
deem
That midst the Silence you may hear Heart Beats
And the full Throbbing of the World's Pulse fall.
It is not wholly Fancy. Nature's all
Too large for Reckoning, our Discernment cheats
With golden Mists and Glamours of a Dream.

THE LAMENT OF THE HARPER.

Now the great Man is at Rest.
'Tis the Law!—we may not sorrow;
Life is but a fleeting Breath,
Here to-day and gone to-morrow.
Day by Day the golden Sun
Through the Heaven tracks his Way:
Day by Day his Course outrun,
Leaves the Skies forlorn and grey.
So ever, as the Ages wane,
Life from Life is born again,
And ever rises like the Sun,
To toil a Space, and then to set.
Be happy, ere thy Sands are run,
Be glad to-day—the World forget.
For thee the Lilies and the Lotus bloom,
And still one faithful Heart is thine;
For thee the Lute shall breathe a Strain
To banish Care and conquer Pain.
So Life shall seem a Gift divine,
And thou forget the silent Tomb.

———

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

Sweet Star of this World—fading ere the Close,
And yet mid Sunset Glories unoppressed.
(While all the Zenith glows with Gold and Rose,
One cold pure Gleam ennobling all the West).
Lo! quenchless burns Love's radiant Alcahest,
Transmuting all the undaunted Heart of a Star.
The Sunset Vapours vanish, swathed, enmeshed—
The Beacon Light shines on though from afar!
Now Courage rides—(Great Continents give Proofs,
An Empire reels beneath the clattering Hoofs)—
In that far Tourney where the Soul's Eyes see
Set Lists for warring Hearts! Wherein to Pain
Tears noble Rage doth give—No conquered Will—
and We
Whirled like the empty Dust in that great Train!

———

MARIN FALIER.

Lost and discrowned one only Face there lacks
To mar the perfect Symmetry of these,
That ersttime guarded well mid stormy Seas
The Pilotage of Empire. All Attacks
That Force or Fortune makes, these could sustain;
All Dangers, Doubts, Disgraces these have borne.
Those Hearts have Known the poignant Pride of Pain
That makes Defeat as Death, Pity as Scorn.
What Grandeur, Force, majestic Valour won,
Had these not been by that were all undone;
A mighty Realm by Dreams a Madman dreamt—
So long dead Pride still scorns the rash Attempt,
And e'en in Death that deathless Hate lives on;
Dark Looks are eloquent though Speech be gone.

A MAZURKA OF CHOPIN'S.

Now the first Flush of Sunset floods the Field,
And by the dark, slow Stream the tolling Bell
Gives Token sad of Love's Redemption sealed,
When Death's great Register makes Quittance well.
Oh! for the laden Breath of the fierce South,
Or even the fulgurous Cloud and Levin Belt,
Better than thus with wasting Sickness felt,
And yet unseen, to parch with fulsome Drouth.
Let Danger wave her flaming, snaky Torch,
Athwart the damp and dumbly heaving Earth,
With pallid Fires that harden though they scorch,
Let the cold Winter blow in icy Dearth.
It cannot bring such Iron Heaviness
As Man's innate Inhumanness.

A PIECE OF AMBER.

Flotsam of rolling Tides frail Wreckage borne
On Times dark Ocean from some lonely Shore,
In dreamy Flittings past the jagged Flaw,
The thundering Surge of icy Coasts forlorn.
With Chill of Time and Winter's Scathe outworn,
Deafened through Ages with the Breakers Roar
A Myriad barren Years' congealed store
To us consigned—unchanged as if in Scorn
Portraiture of a Myriad Lives of Men
Stilled now and impotent—dumb Irony
Through all the Thoughts and Deeds that busied them,
Of ceaseless Change, ceaseless Futility.
A Pity yearning Allegory! Then
A Drop of Heart's Blood turned into a Gem.

———

MOONLIGHT.

With such chaste Splendour as thou rid'st the Skies,
Yet sadly, and perchance as wan of Face,
As Times agone in variant Age and Place,
Thou glancedst on some sad Lover's weary Eyes,
And with such Gentleness and noiseless Course
Closing the gaping Verges of the Sense
Touchedst to Sleep (the Bliss thou owest), Source
And Instrument of Action—Pallid tense,
Brilliance unfading—All the Thoughts and Pangs
Of Tediousness and Fever slaking quite—
Earth's weary Chain of Carefulness that hangs
Life's Total Sum and Message to indict,
Blotted as now in Floods of glowing Light
A Sea, an Ocean of refulgent Night!

———

NIGHT.

Doth some chill night Wind through the Forest dim,
A wasting Threnody of Pain pursue,
Or from the Past some subtler Passion limn
Translucent Skies of frail ethereal Hue—
A Background for the Moon, whose wan fair Face
Still bears these Thousand Years, nor Scar, nor Line,
Shines through dim Glade with never changing Grace
As in the Age when searching the Divine
Men peered into the Abyss and marked arise
What of the troubled stars outshone the Press,
Shaming the Pomp of glittering Sovranties,
As in her Light unable to endure
The Rivalry of Heaven, the Strife, the Lure,
The Diadem of Nights' great Emperess.

A SCHERZO OF CHOPIN'S.

Dark Curtain of the Night—an Ebon Chest
Wherein the Sweets of Union rifled lie.
Anemones—Blood red for Fate's Behest
Unto despairing Hearts, despairingly
Muttered through heavy Silence. Sobbing Notes
Of Dryad Exiles Anguish that forlorn
From Day to Day upon the Blackness floats.
Soul of Things past on the sick Present borne,
Whence Memory backward and reluctantly
Discerns (amid the Hazes sultry swirled
Of Hours unnamed—grim Winter's Garner sere),
An ambient Melody, entrancingly
Throbbed out upon the Bosom of the World—
Through Dusk, and sullen Turmoil of the Air.

On Chidiock Tichborne's
Lines written under sentence of Death.

Faint Clamour of an agonising Heart,
Beating its Wings against the iron Bars,
Bruised Limbs and Visage now that Fortune mars
And weary Feet that nevermore shall start
To voyage on the unbeaten Way—apart—
Nor faltering Tongue with wonted Utterance give,
Nor Hand indite more glowing Lines to live
After the fiery Soul that forged their Smart
Shall in the Aftertime lie parched and mute,
With sordid Dust choked up—the living Lips
Dried with a Drouth of Death—the shattered Lute,
Shrilling dark Fate, and Love's Asperity,
By dusky Hangings checked, torn Tapestry
Of empty Chambers—at a Noon's Eclipse.

THE LUTE.

She touched the Lute—beneath her Fingers flowed
The Sprite impersonal that dwelt thereby—
Lone Captive of the Years that amplify
Nature's grim Audit, or as being endowed

With Prescience as Remembrance disallowed
To meaner Creatures, rustling Melody
Beneath her Fingers as lone Cedars bowed
Before the Wind (whose heavy Branches sigh)
Made sing of perished Years that gave them Birth !
Glimmered thro' fading Dusk twixt Yesterdays
And dusky Morrows, with bright single Star
To front the Passion laden Face of War,
Life's fragrant Garden where the Cypress stays
The Rose's Petals, falling to the Earth.

PULVIS ET UMBRA.

Sky, bitter Sky, beneath whose biting Rays
Life's glistering Pageant lies, exposed and bare,
Dry Bones of Planning, Dust of empty Days,
A Desert Plain in which what harbours there
All droops and perishes. Ah ! must these Pains
Thus waste their Groanings on the wilful Air ?
I'st but a cruelty that Sense remains
Lest Miseries like wild Beasts to their Lair,
Should vent in Secrecy their Strength, and so be
stayed.
Wouldst thou we Beggarmen to mocking Throngs,

All unabashed our flaunting Rags displayed
Of idle Sophistries, recriminated Wrongs.
Nay, let us die as we disdain to live,
And die because the World has Naught to give.

QUIS DESIDERIO SIT PUDOR AUT MODUS TAM CARI CAPITIS ?

Unhappy Woodland Ways, whose Beauty now
Is spent and withered for the Loss of one
Whose briefer Day than Summer was, is done.
Brief Story told, brief Glories cruel Time
Wastes with defacing Hand. Then without Pause
Spreads Night apace, and biting Winter Rime
Wilts all the Flowers. O ! so let this Cause
Suffice my Sorrow, and the empty Show
Of Fantasies that thus in Pageant come,
That come like fleeting Ghosts and then are fled,
Be for a Moment equalled with the Things that are
Yet matched that Voice, when Music's self is dumb,
Or robed with Glory these when Earth is bare;
Bare lacking thee, and dumb since thou art dead.

BOETHIUS.

"Gladio bacchante Gothorum
Libertas Romana perit. Tu Consul et exul
Insignes titulos praeclara morte relinquis."

I that once Garlands twined of Poesy,
Must now her Thorns as erst her Roses use.
Groans to parched Lips impels the stricken Muse,
And Tears unfeigned yield an Elegy.
Terrors that others daunt—ay! Friends deny.
Stay not these Tones to company a Cell.
The Laurel Branches plucked in Days gone by,
Wreathe (sere and withered grown) my Forehead well.
With wasted Limbs, white Locks, worn trembling Gait,
Th' untimely Season moulders ere its Prime.
Not mine own Age but old as Sorrow I,
Unblest as those through whose long Summertime
The heavy Steps of the Avenger wait

Sparing the Joyous Days, till Winter's Frost
Shatters the Leaves before his sudden Chill.

From Laughter, not from Tears, Death takes his Fill
Of Splendour and of Beauty only fain—
Stills not the wounded Heart nor heeds its Pain.
Once when propitious fickle Fortune was
Death came unasked, reluctant turned again.
Now to my Urgency, my Woes, alas!
Unfaithful Death nor Stay nor Respite brings.
My Heart grows Sick with waiting—unforgot
My vanished Greatness, Vaunt of Hours lost
This wretched Present by that former lot
Weighs—in the Balance of inconstant Things.

Amid a sullen Sea of Carefulness,
The Soul's poor flickering Taper burning dim,
Can but to Darkness Desolation limn—
Without the Winds of this World's Passion sigh,
Within dark Care devours, devours apace—
One was there once could under freer Sky,
With winged Thought the Ethers Passage trace
The rosy Light of risen Suns descry.
More than that burning Course, that Noontide Fierce,
More than the wandering Track the Planets show,
Thy chaste cold Beams, O Cynthia, me oppress
That strange Aloofness, those from human Woe
Remote insensible Regards my Spirit pierce.

Ay ! and the Causes whence Oceanus
Springs to the Lashing of the furious Wind.
What Force the stable Earth in 's Course designed,
What now to western Waters Hesperus.
Or from the reddening East the Day Star brings,
Whence lavish Spring her vermeil Flowers flings.
Whence in due Season Autumn emulous
With purple Clusters to the Elm Tree clings.
Ah ! all was plain. But now the darkling Hour,
With Prison and with Bonds in our Despite,
With heavy Weight of Chains compelleth us,
Flings to Captivity our helpless Right,
Into the sordid Dust, Life's wilted Flower.

Out of bleak Shadows Light and Vigour lost,
Unto my tearworn Eyes doth Fate restore ?
Darkened with stormy Clouds, and more and more
Swathing the Light of Day, as now the Wind
Of rude Detraction (Fate's ignoble Night),
With rainy Tears and Buffetings unkind
Blots out the starry Skies, pure Reason's Light,
With Prison Gloom Earth's meaner Things from
Sight ?
Yet, ah ! should some strong Wind untainted sweep
Athwart the sullen Spaces of the Sky.

Should Justice yet again desirèd most
Gleam forth—with quivering Wrath our Misery
And piteous Woes with Retribution keep!

Whose Age undimmed treading on haughty Fate,
Can with a flaming Heart and scornful Eye,
The Shocks of Time as from bare Heights descry—
As breathing some pure Air, some nobler Clime,
Not from the raging Madness of the Sea
Removes, nor from the Waves Profundity.
Wouldst unto belching Flames of Etna climb?
Such Storms vex never Thought's Immensity.
No blazing Thunderbolt or pitchy Shade
Nor Wrath's dark Tyrant, foiled by Virtues Shield,
Can stir the Mind's undeviating State;
Nor Fears enchain its Grandeur—thus to yield
Calm, passionless forever undismayed

Stay and Support of all the starry Sphere,
Who from thy Fixity of Grandeur seest
The Firmament of Worlds a Whirlpool seethe—the least
As unforgetful as the mightiest to obey—
For now the Sun's great Light the Splendour mars
Of Night's Vicegerent—after from the Day

More distantly divided her full Sway
With all its pale Effulgence shames the Stars.
Now Love's bright Planet harbingers the Sun,
And 's borrowed Brightness in that Glory dies,
When Phoebus glittering Beams i' the East appear.
Anon in Order changed through western Skies,
Luring the frigid Stars his Race is run.

Now doth the Chill of Winter bare the Trees,
And thine unwavering Law doth stint the Day ;
And now the Night wears its swift Hours away,
When Summer's Heat makes all the Pastures lean.
Now blustering Boreas doth bereave the Bough
Of Spring's rathe Burgeoning and now—but now
The gentle Zephyr doth the Copse with green
Most tenderly refashion. Who doth sow
As lone Arcturus watched his busy Flail,
Frosted with pinching Rime, so Sirius shall
With ruddy Glitter o'er the droughty Leas
Welter in Summer Heat when Crops are tall—
No Deviation may that ordered Purpose fail.

Dost thou abandon all the breathing Earth
Unto its Wretchedness and its Despair ?
Doth shuffling Fortune play its Pageant here

By thee unhindered, aye ? Forever then
Shall Insolence the Face of Merit spurn,
Vice ride enthroned over the Heads of Men,
Wronged Innocence to useless Indignation burn,
If such the Lesson that perforce must learn
(Consenting thou) thy World ? Yet 'mid the Gloom
Of Fire and Light a Soul doth Honour keep,
Although the clustering Shadows mask its Birth.
Yet hath the Just that Name, although the deadly
Steep
Drags Virtue down to a dishonoured Tomb.

From the full Harmony of Heaven's Array,
Regard once more our jarring Misery ;
Where shameless Lies and glozing Perjury
Corrupt the Hearts and solemn Acts of Kings.
Ruler, whoe'er thou art, forget not us
Who are not least among created Things ;
Whom now harsh Fate into Destruction brings
Amid vast Seas, and Surges perilous.
Forget not us, and ere our Day departs
Stay of our Weakness, our Infirmities ;
Make firm the Earth with thine authentic Sway,
Scatter thy Gifts of Night to weary Eyes,
Thy Light of Justice unto aching Hearts.

When to his Detriment the Crab compelling
The flagging Sun toward the lengthening Night
Makes to set South his Face, athwart the Heaven's
bright,
Blazing in fatal Languor, then denied
The Taste of Ceres' Bounty, and his Eyes
Turned on the barren Earth, to the Oakwood hies
The worsted Husbandman. No Dew on Violet lies
Amid the Woodland Gloom, when far and wide
Raves the Northeaster, nor before their Date
Pluckst thou the purpling Clusters of the Vine
With its harsh Crudeness eager Taste repelling.
Not for thy present Need the Tendrils twine,
But in appointed Season early late

Its Fruit doth ripen—Autumn hath its own,
Its mellow Load to bear, then Winter's Chill,
Nurse of the Hopes of Spring, may with a Will,
Fling wide the Gates of the Year until doth come
Last, amid flagging Steps, Rose garlanded,
The Summer's drowsy Silence. All are sped—
Each his appointed Duty owed and remedied
The gaping Seams of Nature. This our Home
Hath aye its wonted Order abhorring
Transgression of its Bounds—and thou great Power

That o'er our Destinies keepst Watch alone.
Away from thee the sullen Heavens lower,
Closes the Night of Sorrow menacing!

No Light is shed,
No Light around
The Sullen Ground,
From Stars aghast.
The turbid Sea
Doth hungrily
Moan as a straining Suppliant lashed,
And glassily
The Waters gleam
With broken Lights,
Such as of Summer Sultriness are bred,
Ere veers the Wind of Fate, and Grief benights
With Sediment Life's Stream;

Whose Steps are sped
By Mountain Ways,
And after stays
At some fell Torrent's Brink
Around him he sees sink
Of Age old Rock, as by a Tempest riven
Severed the Link

That binds to future Time the Pledges Time has
given.
Turn, Wayfarer, thy Head,
This Road you go
Tends to a Land where Fears and Griefs lie dead,
Where human Knowledge shuns no no,
But Hope is fled!

O! wanton Fortune, that doth haughtily
The Pride of Monarchs to the Dust abase.
Who to sweet Ruth nor ever yieldest Place
Nor savst the Lowly but in Fickleness.
Like Euripus in Flood thy Currents surge
With Mockery and with laughter to the Verge
Of extreme Fate. Thou drivest pitiless
Laughing at Grief, and wildly still doth urge
Thy cruel Pastime. O! to show thy Power
Needed this Wretchedness, that mortal Things
Should with Tear blinded Eyes incessantly
Lament and languish when thy Hardness brings
Despair and Triumph oft to one brief Hour?

Countless the Sands that to the hungry Shore
The harsh Sea throws—the quivering Points of Light
As countless that upon the Skirts of Night

Hang for a Season. If Fate's brimming Store,
If Fortune's Bounties as exhaustless were,
Yet should Man's greedy Heart still as before
With covetous Wishes all Heaven's Patience dare.
Not Gold itself were Phrygian Treasuries bare,
Rolled Pactolus no Dross athwart his Plain,
Not Gauds of Office, not the Mob's Applause,
Can satiate that still devouring Maw.
Lo! in this Strife of getting, all the Wars
Are without Triumph, and the Victories vain.

For still fierce Envy of her Passion makes
An ever-widening Gulf wherein Desire
Forever cheated, like devouring Fire
Preys on its Fuel—Wordly Hopes—that spring
Unchecked and rank within the teeming Soil.
Life, like a Desert Mirage, to Man's Toil
But airy Shapes and flattering Lights doth fling,
And still with barren Sand his Grasp doth foil—
Still through bare Rocks and parching Wastes makes go
Unsatisfied with deathless Hungering—
A lean and wasted Shape that only wakes
From Dreams of an unblighted Harvesting
Unto new Wretchedness, unending Woe.

Learn from the changing Heaven,
Where Phoebus gins paint with Light,
Dimming the Flames of Night,
And the glittering Stars are grown pale!
From the Garland late gathered of Roses,
When the Zephyr blew soft in the Vale,
Since withered and sere are all Posies
When the North Winds prevail.
Ere the Storm all the harsh Wastes doth trouble
Of the Waves, and its Turbulence mars,
Ere its Rage hath the Blacknesses riven,
Night and the Glamour of Stars,
The Sea in its Bosom doth double.

Trust to the wildering Storm Wrack,
The fleeting Glimpse o' the Moon,
The Winds that late or soon
From Sleep to Rage are passed, from Rage to Sleep.
Aye! Winds that keep
Purport unchanging through their endless Change;
Wild Airs that range
From Clime to wavering Clime, from Deep to Deep.
Trust to the Waves that never will be still,
And read forever in their wild Uncertainty
Of this World's shifting Fortunes, out alack,

A Turbulence as Ocean's, urgently
Moved like the Waters at the Wind's Will.

Who would Contentment find and Peacefulness
Let him the freezing Mountain Tops eschew,
And Wastes of Sand where all the Winds bestrew
Wrecks of the World. O'er one the North Winds blow
Too fiercely ever, and the other doth
Too treacherously engulf and drag below
Whence no Redemption is, nor Trace to show
The clinging Footstep and the Spirit loth:
This is our Life—but Footsteps and astray
That scarce imprint the trackless Paths of Time—
Dry Bones that bleach into Forgetfulness,
An idle Wind that bears a Snatch of Rhyme
Or Song from some Wayfarer's Roundelay!

These shall decay. But do thou firmly build
On what decays not nor shall suffer Change.
Let all the Storm Winds in their Fury range
Shake what they will, they shake not this of ours
Impregnable Resource. In Quiet take
This Peace for Portion—In thine own self make
A tireless Fortress that no hostile Powers

Shall ever vanquish or from Firmness shake.
Though of rich Argosies the sated Sea be bare,
That yesternight such direful Clamour made,
Still thou, firm set in that thy Judgment willed,
Shalt, till the Years are gone, and unafraid,
The Storms deride, and Turmoil of the Air.

A Vision of the golden Age—beneath the Bough,
Sleeps the wild Hunter, and his Dreams are made
A pregnant Silence in the sylvan Shade—
Lo all the wild Things of the Forest fly
Before his Hawk, his Hound, his Venery,
And if he thirst or hunger, for his Dearth
There close at Hand the clear Stream flashes by,
With harmless Fruits and Berries of the Earth
At his mere Will.
See o'er our Silk and Purple fling
Their lengthening Shadows the spent Hours—ay,
we sip
Savouring at Life's gold Cup, but never now
Taste of that full Content—Parched is the Lip
Tinged with the sombre sanguine Sunsetting:

The Ships for us sail on a thousand Seas;
For us th' unquiet Earth is torn and scarred;

For us the painful Face of Man is marred
Even unto the Dust upon a thousand Fields—
Ay and each mocking Gem the dark Mine yields
Glitters against us coldly—we are spent
For a poor Hire—all that we have meant
Is but a Shadow, the distorted rent
Wry Issue of the Volcan Life—our Wrongs and Woes
Burn like its fiery Torrent, and its Ashes thrown
Cumber our lingering Footsteps, while from Life's late Lees
We snatch one last Carousal, ere the Presage of the unknown
Unto the Mountain Tops with Darkness grows.

When Sword and Poison played their deadly Part,
With shattered Fanes and Slaughter of the Great,
Crime heaped on Crime, a murdered Brother's Fate,
The smouldering Ashes of a Mother's Pyre.
Ah! of that callous Heart, that dared appraise
The Husks of Beauty ready for the Fire,
The devastating, the relentless Ire
What Solace, what Alleviation stays?
What should the Sway that fetters Regions wide
(The Sum the Triumph of Humanity)
Avail to soften that unpitying Heart,

To check that Madman's ruthless Mockery
Or turn a Tyrant's Insolence aside ?

What common Earth now mingles with the Dust
Of stanch Fabricius ? Where doth the Censor hide
His Sternness of old Time ? And where doth bide
All but the Name of Brutus ? Fame doth only stem
A scanty Moment this encroaching Death !
Little availeth it to honour them
With fading Laurels and triumphal Wreath !
Small Profit for the Dust that lies beneath
To trust to Mortals unavailing Breath,
Since Time shall sweep all Excellence away,
All Triumphs moulder, and all Swords turn Rust.
Glory but dooms us to a sure Decay,
And this World's Grandeur to a second Death !

All vain that Glory is. Look on the Night
And thou mayest see within how small a Span
Are bounded all the puny Ways of Man.
Before those Eyes that do eternally
Shine down upon our changing Destiny,
Before that infinite unfaltering Peace
Earth's babbling Tongues and peevish Clamours
cease.

Vain are Man's Craftiness and Policy,
Since Death with even Hand doth level all
The Schemes of Mortals, and their Wit deride.
Death makes a Mockery of Princes' Might,
And Humbleness is equalled there with Pride.
Into his Swathe both low and high Heads fall.

That the great Firmament unswervingly
From Change to Change its endless Pattern plies
That Tree or lowly Herb in Rivalries
Struggle and yet are leagued—that Phoebus' Car
Still Blushes scatters i' the pale Cheek of the East,
The wan Moon rules the Night, and Night afar
Her Harbinger envisages—the Twilight Star—
That Seas that raven alway, at the least
Fixed Confines have, nor yet with greedy Hand
May the dry Sands encroach the wallowing Main—
This Order springs from Love's enduring Potency.
Love rules the Sea, the Sky, and yet again
Beneath Love's Dominance abides the Land.

Were but released the Chains of that great Sway,
And severed each dependent Intercourse,
Or jarring seen that Tyranny of Force
Bursting the Bonds of Law—Were all resolved

Into the Chaos whence Love's Power has drawn.
Of that dear Influence robbed, the World forlorn
Had bartered Trust for Rapine, Peace for Scorn,
Bonds of true Marriage were indeed dissolved,
And Ties of Friendship broke—the Bitterness
Of all a World unfaithful brought to View.
In Time be happy Mortals of a Day,
Consign to that which rules as well as you,
A Myriad Orbs in Heaven's Emptiness.

Ah! happy he that may of Happiness
Behold the Fount, the yet unperished Spring,
And to the heedless Dust Life's Burdens fling.
Lo! in the bygone Days in his Life's Wreck,
The wretchless Orpheus plucking at his Lyre
Could make the Chill Rocks weep for his Desire,
The hoary Forests bend, the Rivers check.
Undaunted by the gory Stains that fleck
The tawny Lion's Side, intrepid he did yield
(Since Fate could never deal a fiercer Wound)
Unto the savage Beasts his Harmlessness.
Lo! at his Heels the Hind, the Hound,
All savage Hearts his linked Notes had healed,

But not himself. At Hell's high Gates he stays,
And his sweet Note the dusky Silence tears,

The Furies, Cerberus, whate'er him hears
Cease from their Passion. Whate'er Things are wrought
To Fear, to Anguish, and to Misery—cease—
Ixion's Wheel is to a Standstill brought—
The Titan from long Torture hath Release—
To Tantalus' fierce Drouth at length comes Ease—
Yet unavailing all his Pains to move
The shadowed Heart and sullen Brows of Dis.
To soften that fell Lord, to whom he prays,
How unavailing all his Music is,
His boundless Anguish, and his boundless Love!

But in a Voice of gentlest Pity spoke
The aye unpitying Ruler of the Dead,
And as one laughing low, " We're conquered " said,
" Your Song that idly strikes the empty Air,
" Buys you your cherished Comrade, still as fair,
" As sweet, as precious as when she did live—
" Buys you your Wife, but to the Gift we give
" This saving Clause appended, that you bear
" Straight toward upper Earth and look no more
" As living Man on these pale Realms of ours."
Lo! Favours of the Lord of Hell!—a Fuel and its Smoke,

For still the Smoke mounts upward, and still the
Flame devours,
Writhen and bleak and anguished—the Heart's Core.

Who shall give Laws to Love since mighty Love
Is to itself its most imperious Law.
Backward he looked that should have looked before,
And lost the precious Spoil that he had taen,
Lost out of Sight and out of Life Love's Gain,
Till deaf and sightless through the Hebrus' Roar,
The raving Maenads' Clamour Death's last Pain
Stifles on dying Lips the Name once more
Murmured—*Eurydice.* O! be ye ware, who pry
Deep into Nature's Heart, to pluck from thence
Her secret Purpose, lest as fated prove
With such strange Passion, all your Eloquence,
And chained with Silence Wisdom's Subtlety.

DEMOSTHENES IN CALAURIA.

Through the dark Night and Lapping of the Waves
I come to lay my weary Heart at Rest
On this last Journey, whereunto the dull
And unsubstantial Mirage Men call Life, has brought
Me too frail, broken, hope-bereft to mourn

The Devastation that the Storm amid the Flowers
Wreaks. O! unequalled City, flowerlike,
Springing to Life among the barren Rocks
Of parching Attica, where Science, Arts, Philosophy
Flared as a Beacon to the Minds of Men.
Would I had perished ere thou ever heardst
My Voice, or hearing hearkened not.
Whence did my Heart forever like a Flame
Aspire toward the highest if it might
Serve but to kindle as a Torch the Pyre
Of all my native Town, my countrymen.
Or as the flickering Levin on dim sultry Days
Threaten with forked Tongue the hallowed Shrines,
Illuminating that which it destroyed as amorous,
Or envious of Felicity disdained,
Too easy won from Minds magnanimous!
O! Antipater, could thy Myrmidons
Tear from my Heart the Love this Body bears
Its native Country, thou hadst conquered there
More wide a Realm than when thy Master's Hand
Ruled from Hydaspes to the Tyrrhene Sea.

Ay, to the weary Flux of Tide and Time
There comes a Turn. The Tides are turned, and now
On the full Flood I wander out to Sea

To meet the Light of Dawns and Noontides without
End
In one unbroken Glory aestivate.
Or is my Pathway laid on Beams of Light
Across the wallowing Tide? or does it float
Splendid and iridescent as a Web,
A broken Web of earthly Hopes and Cares,
In the full Air unvanquished, undismayed
From Earth at last dissevered—what to me
Are Macedonian Schemes and Craftiness?
Fail, babbling Tongues—into Eternity's
Majestic Silence as Intruders yield.

Last Night I dreamed, and in my Dream methought,
Methought my Heart before the Gods arraigned,
When every Voice cried at me still replied.
The very Stones had Speech, and did accuse;
A Sea of lowering Faces turbulent
And dark with Passion, cast at me its Wrath;
Tottered the lofty Fanes, and in the Shade
The Cypresses held Counsel with each other.
Through the dark Air the Pinnacles of Gold
Hot Gleams of Anger tossed—the marble Gods
Frowned their Displeasure—all alone I walked

Through stranger Streets, a Stranger—but still
Loveliness
Clothed all the Precincts of forgotten Ground.
Still to my Ears a lamentable Voice
Yielded with doomed, all doomed—the Land's
fordone—
Decked with these Beauties as a Slave to pass
Unto a Buyer's Hand—to northern Lords
Comes fallen Athens—comes that you betrayed,
" For as your Glory had your Valour shone,
" Greece ne'er had served the Mars of Macedon."
Ah ! if tis so—if on me that is laid
Come Death, come Anguish—
Pain inexorable
Lay bare my shrinking Body to the Storm.
Beat Winds upon me, shatter Tempests o'er
My ruined Forehead. Devastation break
Ever more furious oer me—wailing Surge assuage
Inexpiable Wrath. Vindictiveness
Of lowering Fate with Thunder Tread approached
Unto th' extremest Limits of the Soul
All make fordone, forsaken—Emptiness
Of Words and Reason to sweet Ruth succeed,
Courage that never bowed be broken now.
For to such End all mortal Things conspire,

Since like a Mole this many Years unseen
Worked Fate in the Dark, resistless, restlessly,
Plaiting Destruction of mere Silt of Sand—
Bred Hearts unpitying—avid Craftiness
Nurtured in that dark Soul that scathless rides
O'er fallen Attica—Venom of Hellebore
Nourished with clammy Dews thro dreary Nights
Lit by no Stars—mid barren Pasturage
Famished save for this End—the Taint of Steel
Red from Earth's callous Womb for this—For this
Of poisoned Arrows for unarmèd Limbs
The quivered Store of Fate !—as Pieces on the Board
Moved Kings and Empires for that only End.
Long Years as Minutes made, and Minutes' Span,
Grown long as Years, by Suffering magnified.
Despairing Struggles, agonising Pangs
Of coward Spirit loth to quit, away from me!
Away gross Shapes that gloom against the Sun,
Away Fears pitiless, pitiless Remorse !

Ah ! with what frenzied mien
Approachest thou the Precincts of the Shrine ?
Dost seek a Refuge ?
There is none can hide
Demosthenes.

Then in my Dream methought
I lay in still Eleusis—suddenly
I heard the rattling Sistra—from afar
A great Light shone—the Noise of soaring Wings
Surrounded me—a mighty Multitude
Veiling their Eyes and doing Reverence—
Like a vast Sigh from some dim Orb suspired—
Rustled their Awes slight Murmur.
Stricken dumb I stood
What Time a flaming Aureola grew
Upon the Darkness, and a low Voice spake
With the wild Whispering of unearthly Airs.

And I all tremblingly
Questioned uncomprehending.
Lo! what Answer came,
For all the Dark as with a Tempest riven
Burst into torrent Rain, rude Buffetings,
Mad Moanings of the Wind and bitter Chill
Of Dawns ill omened.
Out of the wild Dark
Into the Light, into my Bosom drave
A snowy Dove, storm driven, helplessly
Tossed in the Tempest's Power, lost and worn,
And in my Dream I cherished it.—From me it drew

New vital Spirit—gleamed the glazing Eye,
Struggled the feeble Frame too frowardly.

Ah! then a golden Gleam,
A Passion music full of Potency,
Shot to my Soul as twere prefiguring
Love's Vindication, Triumph, Ecstasy.
Fading, ah! all too quickly—too ill understood.
Yet in a Moment's Space that Energy
Pierced to my inmost Memories and found
No more incomprehension!

Then meseemed
To watch the chilly Dawn—a cold grey Sky
Flecked with pale golden Light—the uttermost
Of Solitude and Silence.

At my Heart
Lodged in my inmost Breast, the Bird no more
Throbbed with the Pulse of Life, no more drew
Breath—
Dead in the midst of Music, dead that was
The Solace of the Night.

Ah! fallen Voice,
Precursor of the storm, and doomed to be
Shattered and riven in the cruel Blast
That slays and spares not, though it cannot take

The Glory of the quenchless Sacrifice.
Look out Demosthenes, where through the Strait
Glimmers the purple Splendour of the Sea
Changing eternally, yet still the same—Men come
and go,
Busied and tangled in a thousand cares—
The lean Phoenician brooding o'er his Wares,
The swart Egyptian, the loud Cretan then,
Estranged from the Reality of Things
And worn with Empty Labours—Or, not so,
Tis the Soul labours in these growing Pains,
And these are outward Symbols. Nay, tis all
Empty Illusion!
Lo! after me the Macedonian Wolves
Swift follow. At their Prows the eager sea
Chafes with white flakes and foam!
I that have talked of Wars
And dealt in Panics Expeditions
Made Death my Brokerage, with stormy Eyes
Read Havoc in the Presage of the Times;
Made Death my Torch, Danger a rallying Cry,
Still winged my Syllables with Victory . . .
So!
The Flame burns ever upward, O Demosthenes.

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